UNITED NATIONS **DP**

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1996/19
23 May 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Annual session 1996
6-17 May 1996, Geneva
Agenda item 1

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL SESSION
GENEVA, 6-17 MAY 1996

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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The President, H. E. Mrs. Annette des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago), opened the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board. She welcomed all members and observers to the current session, which was the third annual session of the Board since its creation in 1994. She noted that the past years had been extremely productive, with the adoption of new legislative frameworks for UNDP and UNFPA programming arrangements and biennial budgets for 1996-1997, as well as the implementation of successful new working methods for the procedures of the Board.

2. During the current session, it was hoped that the mission statements of UNDP and UNFPA would be endorsed by the Executive Board. The Board would consider the annual reports of the Executive Director of UNFPA and the Administrator of UNDP. The new direction of UNFPA following the International Conference on Population and Development, and the work of UNDP in implementing its initiatives for change in the four focus areas of poverty eradication, employment, environment, and the advancement of women, would also be taken up. The Board would also consider the report of the Administrator on the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) (DP/1996/22) and hold a special event marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNV. In addition, based on the experience acquired during the previous two and one half years in the working methods of the Executive Board, rules of procedure for the Board would be considered. The remaining items to be considered were contained in the provisional agenda.

3. The President informed the Executive Board that the Bureau had held three meetings since the second regular session 1996: on 12 April, 23 April and 6 May. The Bureau had reviewed matters before the annual session and had held preliminary discussion on the issue of the rules of procedure, which would be taken up under item 2 of the agenda of the annual session. The President informed the Board that all meetings would commence on time in order to make the optimal use of conference services available.

4. The Secretary of the Executive Board noted that documents referred to in document DP/1996/L.7/Rev.1 had been submitted to the United Nations Office for Conference Services on time except for the report on the second regular session (DP/1996/17). Most documents had been available in all official languages by 23 April, the date of the pre-session informal briefing. All documents had been distributed to members of the Executive Board at their Missions to the United Nations in New York and were currently available at the documents distribution centre in Geneva. In keeping with the directives of the United Nations Secretariat, there would not be a documentation booth in the conference room in which the Board was convening.

5. Other documentation available to the Executive Board included the rules of procedure for: (a) the Governing Council of UNDP and UNFPA; (b) the United Nations Children's Fund; and (c) the Economic and Social Council. Revised mission statements for UNDP and UNFPA, based on comments made at the pre-session informal briefing on 23 April and on those received in writing from delegations, would also be made available in conference

room papers in English, French and Spanish. A conference room paper on agency support costs, requested by the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996 and incorporating comments made at the informal briefing on 23 April, was also available. The Board would also receive a conference room paper containing an interim report on the work of the working group on documentation, to be considered under item 2. Also available to the Executive Board would be: the 1996-1997 UNDP Plan (English only); the executive summary of the "Assessment of UNDP", sponsored by the Governments of Denmark, India, Sweden and the United Kingdom (English, French and Spanish); part II of the guidelines on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements (English, French and Spanish); and publications of the UNDP Office of Development Studies.

6. The Secretary further noted that the annual session 1996 had been scheduled earlier than in previous years in order to comply with legislation adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 1995, which required that the report of the Executive Board on that session be submitted to the substantive session of the Council in 1996. For that reason, the Executive Board would have to adopt its report on the last day of the annual session. While it was hoped that there would be sufficient time to allow for most of the report be translated and made available to the Board in all the official languages, portions to be discussed on Wednesday, 15 May would be available only in the language of submission.

7. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that, owing to financial constraints, there would be no night sessions. However, informal consultations could be held in the evening, with sound facilities available.

8. The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its annual session, as contained in document DP/1996/L.7/Rev.1.

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Rules of procedure

UNFPA segment

Item 3. UNFPA: Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities

Item 4. UNFPA: Mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 5. UNFPA/UNDP: Reports to the Economic and Social Council

Item 6. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

UNDP segment

Item 7. UNDP: Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including initiatives for change)

Item 8. UNDP: Matters relating to the programming cycles:

- Implementation of the successor programming arrangements
- Request from the Government of Namibia for special status equivalent to that of a least developed country

Item 9. Agency support costs
Item 10. United Nations Volunteers
Item 11. United Nations Development Fund for Women
Item 12. United Nations Office for Project Services
Item 13. Other matters

9. One delegation noted that it had received the documentation for the annual session in Spanish for the first time only at the beginning of the annual session. The Secretary responded that the matter would be investigated.

10. The Executive Board approved the work plan, contained in document DP/1996/L.7/Rev.1, as revised and distributed.

11. The Executive Board approved the report of the second regular session 1996 (DP/1996/17 and Corr.1).

12. The Executive Board approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board, subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Third regular session 1996:	9-13 September 1996
First regular session 1997:	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997:	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997:	12-23 May 1997 (New York)
Third regular session 1997:	15-19 September 1997

13. The Executive Board approved the overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 (95/34). It also agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third regular session 1996 and first regular session 1997, as listed in the annex to the overview decision.

14. The Executive Board adopted the report on its annual session as contained in documents DP/1996/L.13 and Add.1-11 and in the advance copy of the remaining parts of the report as agreed to earlier (see paragraph 6 above) and as orally amended. The report would be issued in final form as document DP/1996/19.

15. The Administrator and President made brief statements thanking all who had participated in the annual session 1996.

II. RULES OF PROCEDURE

16. The Secretary of the Executive Board delivered a statement on the question of rules of procedure for the Executive Board. She noted that following the transformation of the UNDP Governing Council into the Executive Board on 1 January 1994, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993, the Board had held a preliminary discussion of rules of procedure at its first regular session 1994. While various proposals had been made, and issues for consideration identified, the Board had determined that there was no urgency in adopting formal rules and that the Board would gradually identify its own needs in that respect.

17. The Executive Board did, however, take a number of decisions concerning its working methods at that time, including abolishing the three subsidiary bodies of the former Governing Council and with regard to the format and length of Board decisions and discontinuation of summary records. The Secretary reported on indicators such as the decrease in the number of meetings, number of decisions, and total volume of documentation since the inception of the Board. Other factors were participation of observers in all formal and informal sessions and briefings, reduced use of written statements, and adoption of decisions by consensus. The Bureau had played a role in structuring and managing the debates and in ensuring dialogue and transparency in decision-making.

18. Working methods that needed the further attention of the Executive Board included: the division of labour between the annual and regular sessions; the relationship between the scheduling of sessions and documentation distribution, particularly in languages; and length of documentation. With regard to the latter, the Executive Board had established, in its decision 96/6, a working group to review the issue.

19. At the first regular session 1996, the Executive Board had been requested to revisit the question of rules of procedure at the annual session 1996. A review of working methods was also requested.

20. One delegation presented the interim report of the working group on documentation (DP/1996/CRP.11). The working group, formed in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/6, had been set up primarily to address the question of timely distribution of Board documentation in languages. It had considered the length of documentation, submission of documents to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services (UNOCSS), electronic distribution of documents, and the translation and processing of documentation outside the United Nations system. The delegation noted that with reference to those items, it had been necessary to consider other questions relating to the work of the Board, and it was thus premature for the working group to offer specific recommendations. It was hoped that the Board's discussion at the annual session would give impetus for further progress. The participation and assistance of the secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, as well as UNOCSS, in the working group, was much appreciated.

21. Many delegations took the floor with recommendations and comments on rules of procedure and working methods of the Executive Board. Several delegations emphasized the need to adopt rules of procedure. One delegation requested the secretariat to prepare draft rules of procedure for consideration by the Executive Board, taking into account the views expressed by delegations during discussion of the item.

22. One delegation distributed an informal paper on the functioning of the Executive Board. In introducing the paper, the delegation noted that working methods had improved in the two years of the Board's existence and that continued dialogue was important. The paper was intended to aid the discussion on improved functioning and an enhanced relationship between the Board and the Secretariats of UNDP and UNFPA. While better dialogue among Board members and more action-oriented, decision-making characterized the work of the Board, problems remained, including an overloaded agenda and a tendency toward micromanagement, which had generated additional agenda items and reports. Some options for solving the problems were: (a) to adopt formal rules of procedure; (b) as a part of the review of the agenda, to take a better look at how meetings were planned and decisions implemented; (c) create a better standard of reporting and a more flexible system of reporting; and (d) use reports more effectively. The proposal was aimed at enabling the secretariats to prepare better for the Board sessions and to ensure enhanced quality of Executive Board products. It was not a fixed format, but one that should promote predictability. A central element of the proposal was the introduction of an annual discussion of the work plan. Several delegations supported the proposal, which they said was a good framework for discussion.

23. One delegation, supported by others, introduced a draft decision that proposed the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group on the rules of procedure of the Executive Board. It was in response to support expressed during the discussion on the formalizing of rules of procedure in order to avoid future problems. It was noted that the mandate of the working group must be clearly defined.

24. Another delegation, supported by others, proposed a draft decision that would place a time limit on the length of statements.

25. Seven principles for the examination of working methods and rules of procedure were elaborated by one representative, namely: efficiency, effectiveness of work, transparency, effective participation of delegations, establishment of constructive dialogue among delegations, self-criticism and a sense of humour.

26. With regard to documentation, delegations referred to the considerations raised by the working group. Speakers noted that timeliness and quality of reports should be ensured, documentation should be accessible to observers at the same time as members, and that there should be discipline in requesting reports and policy papers on the part of the Executive Board. Some recommended that documentation be circulated directly to capitals. The implications of cost and work load to the secretariat should also be examined. It was pointed out that documents were the basis of work and that the Board was not satisfied with the current system of

distribution. Moreover, documents were not available in all languages early enough, which prevented an effective functioning of the Board. However, it was recognized that the situation was not the fault of the secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, but rather a systemic problem affecting the translation and preparation of documents throughout the United Nations system. It was also noted that the electronic distribution of documentation, while not a substitute for hard copies, should comply with the rules on languages. In that regard, one delegation asked that technical advisory services in the use of Internet be provided to missions. The length of documents should be a function of the importance of the subject; conference room papers should be used as a way of presenting shorter documents. The use and cost of "yellow" (advance) copies, issued only in English, was questioned by some delegations while others supported their continuation as they found the advance texts useful even if available in only one language. Concern about the cost of external translation for conference room papers was also raised. One delegation underlined that General Assembly resolution 50/11 of 2 November 1995 on multilingualism must be adhered to.

27. One delegation noted that the outcome of discussions on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 48/162 should be taken into consideration.

28. Several delegations underlined the important role of observers in the Executive Board and sought clarification on what rules were being used regarding their participation. The need to make some distinction between members and observers was noted. A few speakers cautioned against following the UNICEF rules of procedure in that area.

29. Some delegations asked for a review of the number and length of sessions, with some support expressed for two regular sessions and one annual session. It was noted that the scheduling of sessions could be flexible, according to the agenda. One delegation requested that separate sessions be devoted to UNDP and UNFPA matters, for example, the first session to UNDP and the second to UNFPA.

30. With regard to the agenda, speakers stressed the importance of rationalizing the discussion of subjects, the periodicity in reporting on items, use of intersessional meetings, and timing of items. One delegation queried whether longer sessions would be needed. A list of priorities could be compiled, based on Executive Board and institutional needs for review at the third regular session 1996. There was general support for continued dialogue on the working methods of the Executive Board as it was a process that could be refined over time. The next step would be to adopt a workplan for the Board's work in 1997. One delegation underlined the need for the annual session to focus on strategy and policy issues in order to attract more political interest in capitals.

31. Other issues raised included the venue of Executive Board sessions, the need for punctuality in meetings and limiting the length of statements and the number of interventions on the same item. Decisions should also be limited in length and number. One delegation urged the Board to itensify its perserverence in achieving its real mission - to fight poverty - and in that light, to limit the use of human and financial resources spent on

documentation. Another delegation suggested that two Secretariats, one for UNDP, and one for UNFPA, were needed. One delegation underlined the need to have all in-session documentation available in languages. He referred specifically to draft decisions, which had in some cases during the annual session been issued in one language only, with delegations having little time to review the text prior to its adoption. He urged the Secretariat to allow more time in future sessions to review decisions that were available in one language only.

32. In response to a suggestion from the Administrator that a special event be held in conjunction with the annual session of the Executive Board, it was noted that the Board itself should be organized so as to attract high-level participation and stimulate dialogue.

33. The Secretary responded to a number of queries. She noted that "yellow" documents were issued in the language in which they were written, which was usually English. Yellow copies cost between $20,000-25,000 per year and were funded from the Executive Board Secretariat budget. UNDP did not pay for the translation of official Board documentation, which came out of the United Nations budget. With regard to the production of documentation, she reiterated that the United Nations Secretariat should not be faulted since the problem was larger than just the consideration of UNDP and UNFPA documents. The additional costs of translation of conference room papers into working languages were not high. She stated that the annotated agenda provided an overall view of each Executive Board session, as requested by one delegation. In response to another delegation, she noted that Executive Board field visits were carried out in close consultation with Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York.

34. One delegation, supported by others, proposed that in the interests of advancing further the effectiveness of the Executive Board, and in common with similar arrangements in other forums, that the Board should adopt a voluntary time limit of five minutes for statements. It further proposed that to assist in the observance of this voluntary time limit, the secretariat should provide a "traffic light". The Executive Board decided to agree to this proposal, which would be implemented on a trial basis at the third regular session 1996. It was agreed that the rule should also apply to statements made by the Secretariat, with a number of delegations agreeing that some flexibility could be incorporated in that regard.

35. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/25. Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board

The Executive Board

A. Rules of procedure

1. Decides to convene an open-ended ad hoc working group on rules of procedure for the Executive Board and requests the Secretary of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the

United Nations Population Fund to assist and support the consultations, inter alia, through the preparation of adequate documentation;

2. Requests the President of the Executive Board to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 on the progress achieved during the process with a view to reaching a final decision on rules of procedure at the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 1997;

B. Working group on documentation

3. Takes note of the interim report of the working group on documentation and the comments made thereon by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 and encourages the working group on documentation to finalize its work and present a report, including recommendations, to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996;

C. Functioning of the Executive Board

4. Emphasizes the need to ensure that the approach to the working methods of the Executive Board continue to be flexible and practical;

5. Decides to introduce an annual work plan for the Executive Board and requests the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to prepare, for the third regular session, an outline of issues that could be considered by the Board in 1997, based on previous deliberations of the Board and the organizational priorities and objectives set for 1997, with a view to adopting a work plan for the Board at the first regular session 1997, based on the proposals made on this matter by delegations during the annual session 1996;

6. Recognizes the need for further work to be done on improving the quality and relevance of documentation submitted to the Board and to review the agenda of the Board in order to focus deliberations at each session of the Executive Board.

15 May 1996

UNFPA SEGMENT

III. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

A. Report of the Executive Director for 1995

36. In her introduction to the annual report of UNFPA for 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I)), the Executive Director focused on some of the activities, preoccupations and achievements of UNFPA during 1995, which had been a year of change and transition for the Fund. In working to meet the unprecedented challenge posed by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), UNFPA had gone through a period of self-examination. As a result, it had redefined its programme directions, its resource allocation system, its policy guidelines, its programming procedures and a number of its financial and managerial processes in order to take account of the new programme priorities resulting from the Cairo conference and in order to increase its overall programme effectiveness.

37. Through various consultations and in-house brainstorming sessions, UNFPA had sought to deal with a number of key concerns, such as: the implications for UNFPA of the ICPD Programme of Action and of the recommendations of other recent international conferences; the comparative advantage of UNFPA in the population field; how to achieve a better focus for the Fund's assistance, which meant redefining the resource allocation system; how to become the best advocate for sensitive issues, such as those involving the reproductive health of adolescents; the definition of the Fund's mission for the next 10 years; and the elaboration of methods of collaboration with other organizations both inside and outside the United Nations system. In all those discussions, UNFPA had stressed the utmost importance of accountability and management efficiency and the need to better monitor and evaluate UNFPA-assisted programmes.

38. The Executive Director reviewed the financial and programme highlights of the Fund during 1995, noting in particular the progress made in programme delivery, the substantial three-year decline in carry-forwards, the decline in the percentage of the administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget in relation to income, and the notable increase in resources in terms of both percentage and volume to sub-Saharan Africa. She then stressed the importance of resource mobilization and noted that UNFPA would vigorously pursue a strategy that would seek to convince programme countries and donors to follow up on their ICPD commitments.

39. The past year had been one of intense activity and change for UNFPA, and the Fund had no intention of slowing down. Considerable challenges remained. UNFPA had to strengthen the capacity of its field offices and streamline the relationship between field offices and headquarters. It also had to maintain vigilance to ensure the Fund's accountability, promote national capacity-building and enhance national execution, and improve monitoring, evaluation and audit systems. Above all, UNFPA was fully aware of the need to become more results-oriented and to better demonstrate what had been achieved with UNFPA support.

40. In commenting on the report of the Executive Director for 1995, several delegations stated that the report gave a very good overview of the Fund's activities during the preceding year. They felt that it clearly showed that 1995 had been a very important year for UNFPA in terms of re-orienting the programme in the direction of the ICPD Programme of Action and in training the Fund's staff in that new orientation. One delegation stated that UNFPA activities in terms of revising guidelines and holding seminars and workshops to bring all of the staff "on board" with the new programme priorities had been a wise course in the period immediately following the ICPD and that had been clearly spelled out in the report.

41. However, many delegations felt that the report as presented did not clearly lay out the Fund's strategy for implementing the ICPD and that it was not analytical enough in terms of examining the past year. Others noted that it did not provide an assessment of lessons learned nor did it give concrete examples of results that had been achieved. Several of those delegations noted that their remarks were intended to be constructive criticism designed to help UNFPA. In that regard, two of the delegations stated that they considered that the Fund was performing better than any of the other major United Nations programmes.

42. Indeed, several delegations stated that the problems that were perceived with the annual report and with other documentation were really endemic to the United Nations system as a whole: a lack of frankness; an unwillingness to discuss lessons learned in terms of problems and failures encountered; a lack of concrete examples of how programmes were either working or not working. One delegation said that in reading many of the reports one would get the idea that there had never been any failures, which everyone knew was not true. What the Executive Board really wanted to know was what had been learned from situations that had not been complete successes.

43. Several delegations said that they felt that of all United Nations agencies and organizations UNFPA was perhaps one of those most conducive to change and that the Fund could lead the way by making its reports more open, clearer, more problem-oriented and more analytical.

44. In her reply, the Executive Director agreed with the frank assessment of United Nations reports. She felt that much of it was due to the organizational culture of the United Nations, but that there was no reason why that could not be changed for the better. She said that the UNFPA annual report could be improved but that delegations had to understand that it addressed a lot of sensitive issues, some more sensitive in some countries than others, and that had to be taken into account. She thought it would be possible to be more candid in some of the Fund's other documentation, such as its country programme presentations. She informed delegations that the Fund was adopting a new presentation for its country programmes, which would be used for the first time at the third regular session 1996 of the Executive Board, and she hoped that members would see that they answered many of the concerns expressed in the day's discussions.

45. Several delegations commented on the working of the Executive Board, stating that they felt that discussions inside the Board should also be

more open and frank. Several agreed with the Executive Director, who had said that the discussions should be more of an unrehearsed dialogue and a real interchange of ideas rather than the occasion for Governments to present prepared statements. Several delegations also agreed that the discussions should be more focused, with the annual session being devoted to policy questions.

46. The question of assistance to Africa in order to meet its special needs was brought up by several delegations. They noted that UNFPA had made great strides in re-directing its assistance to countries most in need, many of which were in Africa, but that much remained to be done. In that regard, the need for increasing the absorptive capacity of African countries by capacity-building activities was emphasized by many delegations. One delegation pointed out that it was unfair to single out Africa when talking about "problems": that increasing absorptive capacity was a requirement for many countries around the world and that many non-African countries could benefit from the African experience and vice versa.

47. The Executive Director reiterated the Fund's commitment to helping the countries of Africa and its wholehearted endorsement of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa. She pointed out that the problem was often not a question of absorptive capacity but also of political commitment, and she concurred with the view that the problems were not specific to any one region of the world. The Fund was working to build up national capacity through training of national counterpart staff and by supporting national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Executive Director mentioned the important role that health reform played in the Special Initiative and stated that UNFPA would be an active and full partner in the reproductive health field.

48. Many delegations expressed satisfaction with the way that UNFPA had been able to incorporate important ICPD themes into its work programme: gender equity and equality and the empowerment of women, male responsibility and adolescent reproductive health concerns were among the examples cited by many. Requests were made for more concrete information on how the Fund's new guidelines for implementing the ICPD were actually being utilized. The Executive Director mentioned several areas: (a) she had set up policy application reviews to monitor implementation of guidelines at the country level; (b) resident coordinators had been asked to report on the guidelines for resident coordinators on implementing the ICPD; (c) the review process for all projects and programmes looked at how the substantive guidelines were being applied; and (d) the guidelines for technical support services were being revised to strengthen backstopping.

49. Several delegations commented on financial and budgetary questions, including the need to harmonize budget presentations by UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF. The question of carry-forwards of income from one year to the next was raised by several delegations. They noted the positive trend of declining carry-forwards, as highlighted by the Executive Director in her statement, but they emphasized the need to monitor the trend carefully. In her reply, the Executive Director noted the considerable progress that had been made and stated that it was not always possible to control carry-

forwards since some income inevitably arrived late in the year and could not be spent until the following year. In any case, she did not want to discourage contributions, whatever time of year they arrived.

50. In relation to the slight decline in the percentage of the budget that was taken up by APSS costs (from 17 per cent in 1994 to 16 per cent in 1995), the Executive Director said that it was mainly a result of the large increase in income between the two years - although obviously she was pleased with the trend. One delegation pointed out that even though there was continuing emphasis on reducing administrative costs, it should not become a goal in itself and should not compromise the functioning of the organization. The Executive Director agreed with the statement and stated that all APSS components were being fully implemented.

51. In connection with the Executive Director's announcement that Ms. Kerstin Trone had been appointed to the position of Deputy Executive Director (Programme), several delegations congratulated Ms. Trone on her appointment and noted UNFPA's good record in appointing women to senior- and middle-level management positions. The Executive Director pointed out that 7 out of the 11 senior positions in the Fund were held by women. Several delegations commended UNFPA on its achievement and pointed out that it set a standard to be emulated by other organizations both inside and outside the United Nations system.

52. Questions were raised by several delegations about UNFPA's cooperation, and division of labour, with the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS). The Executive Director said that even though UNAIDS was a very new programme, cooperation between the two agencies had so far been excellent. UNFPA had seconded a staff member to UNAIDS and continued to supply condoms to many national HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in coordination with UNAIDS. In response to another question, the Executive Director said that the majority of the $20.5 million spent by UNFPA in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention had been in supplying condoms and that amount was only a small portion of the expenditures of the entire United Nations system on HIV/AIDS.

53. In response to the Executive Director's statement that the new designation of UNFPA Country Directors as UNFPA Representatives had enhanced the performance of the resident coordinator system, several delegations asked for more explicit information on the extent to which that change had been an improvement. The Executive Director stated that the new designation gave UNFPA greater visibility and improved capacity for coordinating population activities. The commitment of UNFPA to the resident coordinator system had also been shown by having the resident coordinator head the Fund's Project Appraisal Committee in each country.

54. Several delegations pointed out that the new emphasis following the ICPD on reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, did not mean that UNFPA should downplay its area of greatest comparative advantage, i.e., population and family planning. One delegation emphasized that UNFPA had to make a firm commitment to stabilizing world population and had to make that its priority. The Executive Director stated that the Fund understood well where its comparative advantage lay and that it was

the only United Nations organization providing family planning services. She also said that the best way of stabilizing world population was to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.

55. Similarly, several delegations mentioned that reproductive health was only one of three core programme areas endorsed by the Executive Board in its decision 95/15. However, the other two - advocacy, and population and development strategies - had received comparatively little attention in the annual report for 1995. Several delegations mentioned the crucial role that both of those programme areas had to play. The Executive Director said that the report for 1995 had focused on reproductive health since it was a new concept being introduced into the Fund's work following the ICPD, and, as such, it had necessarily been the focus of much attention during the year, especially in terms of training staff and in re-orienting activities. However, that did not mean that the other two areas were being neglected, and they would be covered in more depth in subsequent annual reports.

56. Several delegations welcomed the Executive Director's explanation in her statement that UNFPA was working with the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to reclassify the subcategories of the population section of its programme classification to conform to the three new core programme areas as spelled out in Executive Board decision 95/15. They stressed that the reclassification should be carried out in cooperation with other concerned organizations such as the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Executive Director was able to report that that was being done.

57. The fact that UNFPA could not carry out its work effectively without an assured resource base was mentioned by several delegations. They called upon the world's countries to live up to the commitments they had made at the ICPD. They also asked what the Fund was doing to improve its fund-raising capabilities and to increase co-financing arrangements through multi-bilateral agreements. The Executive Director noted that the best way to raise more money was to have an effective programme, and she thought that UNFPA did. Of course, fund-raising was a major priority for the Fund's staff, which included working out co-financing arrangements. She noted, however, that such arrangements were labour-intensive and created burdens on staff time because of the financial monitoring and reporting requirements of the different donors.

58. A number of delegations mentioned that in order to measure the effectiveness of UNFPA programmes it was necessary to have a reliable and comparable set of indicators, or benchmarks, of progress. The Executive Director agreed completely with that view and stated that UNFPA was working in several forums, especially ACC, to develop such indicators. Indeed, the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, which had been set up by the Secretary-General, was developing a whole range of indicators in different social arenas, led by UNFPA in terms of population and demographic indicators. She agreed with delegations that performance had to be constantly monitored, which required indicators of programme impact.

59. One delegation asked the Executive Director what concrete steps had been taken for greater utilization of NGOs in the execution of UNFPA

projects, echoing the concerns of many delegations that greater reliance be placed on NGOs, as called for in the ICPD Programme of Action. Another delegation recalled the vital role that NGOs had to play in increasing community participation. The Executive Director stressed the important role that NGOS had to play in meeting population and reproductive health goals at both national and international levels. One problem, of course, was in finding appropriate NGOs that met UNFPA guidelines. The Fund had revised its criteria for assessing the managerial, financial and substantive capacity of NGOs and was continuing to identify and to help to strengthen appropriate NGOs.

60. Several delegations noted the Board's ongoing concern for better coordination with other United Nations agencies. In that connection, one delegation questioned the multiplication of coordination mechanisms within the United Nations system, which was found to be very confusing and possibly inimical to their avowed purpose. The Executive Director agreed, stating that she had spent 65-67 working days in 1995 on coordination activities and that there had been a proliferation of committees concerned with coordination. The process needed to be streamlined and made more efficient.

61. The need to continue to consolidate projects as a way of reducing administrative expenses was brought up by a number of delegations. The Executive Director reported that the trend in that regard was favourable and that perhaps the Fund should look at a different manner of presentation of the number of projects in the annual report for 1996 in order to make the trend more apparent.

62. One delegation questioned the lack of information on abortion in the annual report, stating that UNFPA had an important role to play not only in promoting family planning as way of reducing the incidence of abortion, but in terms of promoting reproductive health as well, by, for example, dealing with the consequences of unsuccessful abortions. The Executive Director replied that the Fund addressed abortion in the context of paragraph 8.25 of the ICPD Programme of Action.

63. One delegation asked what role UNFPA envisaged for the private sector in meeting the goals of the ICPD. The Executive Director said that in terms of contributions from private business she did not expect that to happen. She reported that she had met with many business leaders at a recent Davos Conference and that the next step was to try to convene a meeting of business leaders with a well-known business personality as the chair to consider the involvement of the business community in support of population and development programmes.

64. One delegation raised the question of whether holding the annual session in Geneva had not necessarily reduced the participation of developing countries, particularly of least developed countries. In her reply, the Executive Director said that, of course, UNFPA valued the input of those countries very much. The delegation of Switzerland later pointed out that the Governments of Switzerland and France had made available financial assistance, through UNDP, to cover the travel and daily subsistence costs of one New York-based representative from each of the

least developed African countries that were members of the Board, thereby enabling them to participate in the UNFPA segment of the agenda as well. The delegation argued that if certain missions of least developed countries had been unable to participate in the UNFPA segment, it was not owing to financial constraints nor to the fact that the session was held in Geneva.

65. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Executive Director for 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I)), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion on the item as reflected in the report on the session.

B. Work plan and financial implementation

66. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the work plan for 1997-2000 and request for programme expenditure authority (DP/FPA/1996/18 and Corr.1) and the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board (DP/FPA/1996/19). He briefly reviewed the financial performance of UNFPA in 1995, emphasizing the reduction in carry-forwards from $33 million at the end of 1994 to $24.5 million at the end of 1995. In developing the proposed work plan 1997-2000, UNFPA had used a conservative estimate for 1996 income of $300 million and an annual increase in income of 8 per cent, leading to a total income for the work plan period of almost $1.5 billion, only slightly higher than the estimates in the 1996-1999 work plan, which had been presented at the 1995 annual session. With respect to the implementation of country programmes approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board in past years, he stressed that UNFPA had essentially made resources available as planned.

67. In reviewing the performance of the Fund in 1995, several delegations voiced concern that in 1995 only 70 per cent of country resources had been allocated to priority countries and that allocations to reproductive health had decreased proportionately. Some delegations also raised questions on the reduction in the relative share of resources allocated to country activities in Asia. A number of delegations commended UNFPA for the decrease in the proportion of administrative expenditures in 1995.

68. With regard to the proposed work plan for 1997-2000, delegations generally expressed support for the financial planning figures although the projected income reduction in 1996 was of concern. One delegation requested that financial data for the current year be included in the future in order to facilitate an assessment of the calculations undertaken by UNFPA. Most delegations commented on the rate of annual income increase, estimated in the work plan at 8 per cent. In spite of the increase from 1994 to 1995, which had amounted to 19 per cent, a few delegations found the figure overly optimistic and requested additional information on UNFPA's strategy for mobilizing the necessary resources. One suggestion was made for UNFPA to simplify the procedures for multi-bilateral funding as a way of increasing the Fund's programme resources.

69. Delegations welcomed the efforts of UNFPA to implement the new resource allocation approach in a flexible and phased manner, but

some found the increases foreseen for Africa to be inadequate. One delegation sought assurances that despite the proportionate reduction in resources for Group B and C countries, assistance would increase in absolute terms. With regard to carry-forwards, some delegations suggested that measures should be taken to increase absorptive capacity in recipient countries in order to ensure that available resources were fully utilized.

70. Commenting on the format of the work plan, several delegations noted that it seemed to be mainly a financial plan showing general intentions of the use of estimated resources and did not integrate the Fund's strategic objectives into its resource planning process. They suggested that the work plan in future should contain substantive data, notably the intended resource use by programme area. A similar concern was expressed regarding the absence of more analytical information in the document on the status of financial implementation of country programmes since that would help to clarify the resource utilization rates of the various programmes.

71. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) responded to the concerns of the Executive Board regarding the performance of UNFPA in 1995 by referring to the new approach to resource allocation that was replacing the old system of priority countries and to the fact that the slight reduction in allocations to reproductive health had been offset by increases in the closely related areas of information, education and communication. He also emphasized that the resources allocated for the priority countries and for the reproductive health programme area had increased in absolute terms. With respect to the format of the work plan, he explained that it had been developed as a financial planning document at the request of the Governing Council. However, while resource allocation by programme area depended largely on the composition of individual country programmes, the incorporation of programme strategy objectives into future work plans would be reviewed.

72. With regard to the estimated rate of annual income increase, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) informed delegations that the estimate was based upon indications from donor countries and increases in the past, which had averaged 9.2 per cent over the last ten years. He stressed that since the work plan was a rolling plan, the income estimate would be adjusted annually in accordance with actual contributions received. In response to questions about the carry-forwards, he pointed out some of the measures taken by UNFPA to reduce such amounts, including the provision of training and the recruitment of national project personnel to increase absorptive capacities in programme countries. He assured delegations that the forecast of an average of 60 per cent of country resources for countries in Group A was a conservative one that would most likely be surpassed and that targets set by the Executive Board in decision 96/15 might well be reached by the year 2000, possibly even earlier.

73. The Executive Board took note of the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/19.

74. The Executive Board adopted the following decisions:

96/26. Work plan of the United Nations Population Fund for 1997-2000 and programme expenditure authority

The Executive Board

1. Endorses the programme resource planning proposals of the Executive Director set out in paragraphs 7 to 18 of document DP/FPA/1996/18;

2. Approves the request for the 1997 programme expenditure authority at a level equal to new programmable resources for 1997, currently estimated at $257 million;

3. Endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from regular resources for the 1998-2000 period: $279 million for 1998; $305 million for 1999; and $334 million for 2000;

4. Also endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from multi-bilateral funding: $15 million per year for the years 1997-2000.

8 May 1996

96/27. UNFPA: Enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular in Africa

The Executive Board

1. Acknowledges the problem of absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization relating to population programmes in recipient countries, particularly in most African countries, especially the least-developed countries, as noted in the discussions on the reports of the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I) and DP/FPA/1996/19);

2. Requests the Executive Director to thoroughly study the problem within the framework of existing United Nations Population Fund institutional structures and systems, in consultation with relevant actors, including, as appropriate, development institutions that are familiar with the programmes of the United Nations Population Fund in recipient countries, particularly those in Africa;

3. Also requests that a study, as well as other means and activities to address this problem, should focus on concrete operational measures that the United Nations Population Fund can undertake to enhance the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization related to population programmes in recipient countries, in particular, those in Africa. The concrete measures should draw on an analysis of the problems as they are encountered, primarily at the country level;

4. Further requests the Executive Director to present to the Executive Board at its annual session 1998, at the latest, as part of the annual report, concrete recommendations aimed at United Nations Population Fund actions to enhance the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular those in Africa.

17 May 1996

C. Programme-level activities (Evaluation)

75. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the periodic report of the Executive Director on Evaluation (DP/FPA/1996/20), which outlined evaluation activities undertaken by UNFPA during the period 1994-1995. In noting that the number of evaluations of UNFPA-assisted projects continued to increase, she observed that evaluation planning within the Fund still required continued improvement to ensure that project design encompassed the critical elements needed for meaningful evaluations. She pointed to some common problems highlighted in recent evaluation findings, indicating that some of them required longer-term solutions.

76. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) informed the Executive Board that the present monitoring and evaluation system was under revision, with due account being given to the importance of harmonization within the United Nations system. She drew attention to the recently initiated system of policy application reviews to monitor compliance with UNFPA policies and procedures, including, inter alia, the use of evaluation results. The Board was informed of ongoing and planned evaluation activities, highlighting efforts to refine techniques and tools, particularly the development of indicators for programme performance.

77. Many delegations expressed their appreciation for the frankness and candour of the report and of the introductory statement by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme). The importance of evaluation as a management as well as a programming tool was emphasized. The Fund was urged to continue giving priority to evaluation and to the use of evaluation results for strategic programming. Concern was expressed that programme performance and achievements had not been systematically evaluated within the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) process and UNFPA was urged to increase its efforts in that regard.

78. There was general agreement with respect to the relevance and importance of the topics being studied in ongoing thematic evaluations, and the Fund was encouraged to conduct evaluations of similar key issues related to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Delegations welcomed the policy application review initiative and expressed a desire to be informed in due course of the findings of such reviews. The Fund was commended on the initiatives regarding indicators for programme performance and impact assessment, duly recognizing the inherent difficulties with respect to the latter. In the future, the Fund should provide the Executive Board not only with aggregate information on the impact of its endeavours but also with "snapshots" of how the lessons learned were being applied. The need to share lessons learned, both positive as well as negative, was emphasized by several delegations.

79. Several delegations pointed out that the evaluation and monitoring process was of value not just in terms of improving programme performance: another very important aspect was the building of national capacity. By fostering national participation in the evaluation process, the Fund would

enable countries to implement and manage their own programmes better and would instill a greater sense of ownership by the countries in which the programmes were being carried out. Also mentioned was the fact that an effective evaluation system was an important tool for resource mobilization since it fostered a sense of confidence that resources were being used wisely. One delegation pointed out that evaluation should not become an end in itself and that it was valuable as long as it was used to improve programme quality and performance. If it became too burdensome, the result would be self-defeating.

80. In reply to questions about what percentage of UNFPA programmes were evaluated, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) replied that current guidelines required all projects and programmes to have a built-in evaluation component. The number that had an "independent", i.e., external, evaluation did not reach 100 per cent although there had been a continuous increase in recent years. Whether to include such an independent evaluation depended, as delegations had pointed out, on how cost-effective it was. On the question of impact evaluation, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) said that it was very difficult to assign causality. If a country experienced improvements in its demographic and reproductive health situation, it was not possible to specify what part was the result of the UNFPA-assisted programme, but the Fund continued to work to develop indicators to measure impact as well as other aspects of programme performance.

81. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) welcomed comments by delegations on the need to include national expertise in evaluation exercises. The Fund recognized the value of doing so both in terms of drawing on the valuable expertise that existed in programme countries and in terms of the impetus that doing so gave to national capacity-building. She also agreed with delegations that it was necessary not just to produce syntheses of evaluations but to pass on lessons efficiently from one programme to another; the country support teams played a critical role in meeting that objective.

82. The Executive Board took note of the periodic report on evaluation as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/20.

IV. MISSION STATEMENT OF UNFPA

83. The Director of the Information and External Relations Division (IERD) introduced the UNFPA mission statement. He reported that the mission statement was being presented in response to Executive Board decision 95/15. The draft mission statement presented to the Board was the result of numerous consultations over the course of the past 16 months, beginning with a post-ICPD retreat of the UNFPA Management Committee, continuing through the Fund's Global Meeting in Rye, New York, in June 1995, where it was a prominent feature of the agenda. It was subsequently circulated in various versions to all UNFPA Professional staff, both in the field and in headquarters, and then, as a draft, to members of the Executive Board for their comments. The comments received from the staff and Executive Board members were incorporated into the mission statement in so far as possible while still maintaining the focus of the statement.

84. The Director of IERD said that the mission statement was designed to be used in the Fund's publications and for the media, public and staff as a brief statement of the purpose and principles of UNFPA. It would in no way alter the Fund's mandate, priorities, resource allocations or operational guidelines as set out for the Fund in various Executive Board decisions. The statement was seen as a public relations document intended for the general public, not as a United Nations document. Indeed, efforts had been made to make the language as clear as possible, accessible to those who might not be familiar with United Nations terminology.

85. The draft mission statement had been discussed with members of the Executive Board at an informal meeting of the Board on 23 April 1996. At that time, members of the Board had made various comments and suggestions. In response to those suggestions, UNFPA had revised the draft mission statement somewhat and that revised draft was now being presented to the Board as a conference room paper. The Director briefly explained the changes and noted how they responded to the suggestions made by delegations. He then solicited comments on the revised draft from the Board.

86. Several delegations said that they were pleased with the revised draft and felt that it reflected accurately the comments made at the informal meeting. One delegation offered some amendments to the revised draft, asking that the first paragraph be modified to reflect that UNFPA had to act according to priority areas and in full respect of the state policies of recipient countries and that the fifth paragraph and the last sentence of the sixth paragraph be deleted since they were unnecessary.

87. The suggestion for modifications on the part of one delegation engendered a number of comments. Several delegations stated that if there were changes to be made then they also had suggestions they would like to make. However, many delegations felt that it was inappropriate to start revising the draft and did not wish to negotiate changes in wording.

88. One delegation proposed that in the interests of clarity the second use of the phrase "these goals" in paragraph 4 be made more explicit by substituting the phrase "population stabilization". The proposal had the support of numerous delegations, but several delegations felt that, in fact, it changed the meaning of the paragraph. One observer delegation reported that its Government had reservations on paragraphs 3, 4, and 7 of the revised draft mission statement.

89. The discussion then turned on the question of whether the mission statement was a public relations document that could be issued by the Executive Director on her own authority, and on which the Executive Board could simply "take note", or whether it was a policy document that required endorsement by the Board. Both viewpoints were expressed by different delegations. The Board then called on the President for her advice, who asked the Executive Director for her views.

90. The Executive Director explained the process of how the mission statement was developed. It had originally been her idea, and, as stated by the Director of IERD, had been much discussed at the Rye meeting. When the Executive Director reported on those discussions to the Executive Board, members had also been very enthusiastic and had asked her to bring the statement to the Board for its input, which she had been very pleased to do. She had always seen that it was of value chiefly as an informational document to be used within UNFPA as well as with the general public. As such, it was entirely based upon the previously agreed policy directives of the Fund.

91. In response to some of the concerns raised by delegations during the discussion, the Executive Director noted that, as the mission statement said, UNFPA always and only acted at the request of Governments and therefore could in no way act contrary to Government wishes or national sovereignty. UNFPA also subscribed to internationally recognized human rights, and she thought that it was wise to include that in the statement since the largest number of questions posed to UNFPA by the media were about human rights. She reiterated once again that the mission statement did not, and could not, change the mandate of UNFPA.

92. The Executive Director informed the Executive Board that a precedent had been set recently when the Executive Board of UNICEF had endorsed the UNICEF mission statement. The mission statement of UNDP was being proposed to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board the following week. Therefore, she felt that it was necessary that the Board endorse the UNFPA mission statement as well.

93. In discussions that followed, the Executive Board decided to accept certain minor modifications in the text in order to conform with language previously agreed upon or to rectify editorial omissions. However, the Board could not agree to accept the amendment to change the words "these goals" to "population stabilization" even though several delegations supported the amendment. In the interests of consensus, the proposal was therefore withdrawn.

94. The Executive Board decided that it would be possible to follow the Executive Director's request and endorse the proposed mission statement as long as the comments made by various delegations during the discussions were noted in the decision. With that stipulation, the Board felt that it could endorse rather than take note of the statement.

95. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/28. Mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

Endorses the mission statement attached as an annex to the present decision, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, as reflected in the report on agenda item 4 of the session, in particular paragraph 84.

8 May 1996

Annex

UNFPA MISSION STATEMENT

UNFPA extends assistance to developing countries, countries with economies in transition and other countries at their request to help them address reproductive health and population issues, and raises awareness of these issues in all countries, as it has since its inception.

UNFPA's three main areas of work are: to help ensure universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, to all couples and individuals on or before the year 2015; to support population and development strategies that enable capacity-building in population programming; to promote awareness of population and development issues and to advocate for the mobilization of the resources and political will necessary to accomplish its areas of work.

UNFPA is guided by, and promotes, the principles of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994). In particular, UNFPA affirms its commitment to reproductive rights, gender equality and male responsibility, and to the autonomy and empowerment of women everywhere. UNFPA believes that safeguarding and promoting these rights, and promoting the well-being of children, especially girl children, are development goals in themselves. All couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children as well as the right to the information and means to do so.

UNFPA is convinced that meeting these goals will contribute to improving the quality of life and to the universally accepted aim of stabilizing world population. We also believe that these goals are an integral part of all efforts to achieve sustained and sustainable social and economic development that meets human needs, ensures well-being and protects the natural resources on which all life depends.

UNFPA recognizes that all human rights, including the right to development, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, as expressed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and in other internationally agreed instruments.

UNFPA, as the lead United Nations organization for the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, is fully committed to working in partnership with governments, all parts of the United Nations system, development banks, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society. UNFPA strongly supports the United Nations Resident Coordinator system and the implementation of all relevant United Nations decisions.

UNFPA will assist in the mobilization of resources from both developed and developing countries, following the commitments made by all countries in the Programme of Action to ensure that the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development are met.

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

V. REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

96. The Executive Board had before it the reports of the Administrator (DP/1996/18/Add.2) and the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II)) to the Economic and Social Council, which were introduced by the Associate Administrator and the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) of UNFPA respectively.

97. The Associate Administrator provided an overview of the four sections of the report, pointing out that the common format, agreed upon by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) represented a major step forward in joint reporting to the Economic and Social Council and would facilitate the work of delegations. Care had been taken to make the report more thorough, detailed and analytical in response to past concerns of delegations.

98. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) highlighted recent developments in the areas addressed by the report, in particular regarding inter-agency collaboration. He emphasized the progress that had been made towards increased harmonization of procedures and coordination of field-level activities. He also identified some of the problems and challenges contained in the report for discussion by the Economic and Social Council.

99. In his capacity as Chairman of the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) on follow-up to the Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56, the Director of the Geneva Office, Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), had been invited to the present session by the President to provide an overview of the work of the task force. He explained that the IATF had been established within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in order to facilitate system-wide, coordinated follow-up to the resolution. The role of DHA was to support that work, to ensure that agencies were kept informed of progress in addressing the resolution and to undertake briefings with Member States. The Chairman of the IATF commended the report of the Administrator, indicating that UNDP had been an active member of both IATF and IASC, which was the principal mechanism for coordination among organizations involved in humanitarian activities. In referring further to the report, he highlighted three issues of key relevance to the work being done by UNDP: (a) resource mobilization, (b) the concurrent nature of relief and development activities, and (c) internally displaced persons (IDPs).

100. The Chairman noted that the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal (CAP) was not intended to raise resources for development and that additional work was required to establish consultative mechanisms to coordinate the mobilization of resources to meet country needs. In that regard, he referred to the presentation by UNDP of a comprehensive paper on resource mobilization as a positive contribution the work of the Consultative

Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and IATF. Noting that relief activities did not take place in a vacuum but in the context of development and rehabilitation, he also appreciated the work that UNDP had been undertaking in the examination of the connection between relief and development, referring to the UNDP contribution to the CCPOQ examination of post-conflict recovery strategies. Referring to the UNDP paper on successor arrangements, the Chairman also welcomed UNDP initiatives foreseen under target for resource assignment from the core (line 1.1.3) (TRAC 3), which reflected a reassessment and contribution to the realignment of relationships between UNDP and other operational agencies. He also welcomed the prospect of UNDP making available increased resources in response to the needs of countries in special development situations. Noting that more work was required to clarify roles within the United Nations system with respect to IDPs, the Chairman of IATF observed the positive direction being taken by UNDP in attempting to provide greater clarity for its own role in that regard.

101. Numerous delegations commented on the structure and contents of the reports of UNDP and UNFPA. Several delegations pointed out that the present session should not be devoted to a discussion of the substance of the reports, which would really be done in the Economic and Social Council, but should instead identify specific issues for consideration and recommendations by the Council. Specific comments were presented according to the four major areas of the reports.

102. Format issues. Many delegations welcomed the reports as a clear improvement over previous reports and commended the common format, which facilitated comparisons. A few delegations would have preferred a common report. Some delegations commented that the reports could have proposed options for recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, based on a more thorough analysis of problems than contained in the present reports. Paragraphs 2 to 5 of document DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II) were mentioned as a good example of how issues should be discussed in future reports.

103. Follow-up to the triennial policy review. Speaking on the resident coordinator system, several delegations commended UNDP efforts so far on expanding the pool of recruitment but urged that those efforts be intensified. One delegation requested UNFPA to inform the Executive Board about the results of discussions at the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) High-Level Meeting on experiences with the resident coordinator system. It was noted that the system seemed to be functioning more effectively during crisis situations and the factors influencing that should be examined. UNFPA was requested to clarify the future role of the newly designated UNFPA representatives in the context of the resident coordinator system.

104. Follow-up to major conferences. Delegations requested clarification on concrete outputs achieved so far, especially at the field-level, with regard to enhanced coordination and the utilization of guidelines, such as those issued by the inter-agency task force of the International Conference on Population and Development implementation. In that context, there were also questions about the inputs of UNDP and UNFPA to upcoming conferences, namely Habitat II and the World Food Summit. One delegation expressed

concern about the absence of population issues in the documents of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa and requested an update on the integration of population and reproductive health components into the Initiative. Both organizations were asked to inform the Executive Board of their strategies for increased resource mobilization to address the many new concerns that had emerged in the international development field.

105. Several delegations expressed concern at the limited number of country strategy notes (CSNs) that had actually been completed and asked about the reasons for the slow progress. Another delegation expressed concern that the programme approach, although a good concept, had achieved limited progress. Regarding national execution, one delegation requested clarification on the role of national implementation units and their implications for national capacity-building, which some delegations pointed out was fundamental for successful national execution. Emphasis should also be given to increased training of government staff and project personnel in order to enhance national capacity. One delegation questioned UNFPA on how the Fund's revision of guidelines on national execution was being coordinated with efforts of UNDP in that area. A few delegations requested more figures and information on decentralization in UNDP. While one delegation emphasized the need for further cooperation with regional economic commissions, another cautioned on the establishment of strengthened mechanisms while the role of the commissions was under review. Regarding common premises, many delegations expressed satisfaction with progress achieved and planned. One delegation suggested that the reports should have provided more information about common administrative services. Such services needed to be expanded faster and should include more than information networks.

106. Collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. Several delegations stressed the importance of closer collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, but encouraged the organizations to inform the Board of any problems in that regard which could be addressed through the intergovernmental process. One delegation requested information on UNFPA input into the policy framework papers of the World Bank and about the Fund's collaboration with the regional development banks. Information was also requested about the absence of any formal agreements on cooperation between UNFPA and the World Bank. Another delegation inquired as to how the Bretton Woods institutions could be involved in the CSN process.

107. Monitoring and evaluation. One delegation noted that the reports should have provided more information about the impact of evaluations on policy adjustments of the organizations. Further information was requested on recent developments in evaluation in UNDP, particularly in light of the discussions held at the second regular session 1996. With regard to strengthening national capacity for the coordination of international assistance, one delegation asked for clarification from UNFPA on the continued relevance of national population councils or units.

108. Humanitarian activities. Numerous delegations expressed appreciation for the issues raised by the report and by the Chairman of IATF. They stressed the importance of defining the role of UNDP in the overall humanitarian context, specifying that the role of UNDP was not in relief

but in development. Noting that situations and requirements varied by country, further clarification was also required regarding the role of UNDP in such areas as IDPs, demobilization and de-mining. With the current focus on complex emergencies, it was stressed that UNDP should not neglect natural disasters, where the role of the resident coordinator had been important and inter-agency collaboration had often been exemplary. A number of delegations also pointed out the importance of ensuring that practical measures were being taken to ensure collaboration with DHA and with Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank. Many delegations wished to have an opportunity to discuss the matters in more depth and noted that they would return to the subject in the UNDP segment under the discussions of TRAC 3.

109. Replies. The Associate Administrator addressed the specific questions and comments of delegations. He recognized that the report provided comprehensive information but could have had additional analysis to guide the discussions of the Executive Board and the Economic and Social Council.

110. The recruitment of resident coordinators was being opened up to include the large agencies in addition to those of the JCGP. Progressively, as resident coordinators were dedicating more time to coordination activities, they were delegating UNDP representational and operational functions to deputy resident representatives. This delegation was further facilitating the clear separation of resident coordinator functions from UNDP representative and operational functions.

111. Regarding the programme approach, which was progressing steadily, it was necessary to await the outcomes of country programme mid-term reviews and final evaluations, which was where progress would be reflected.

112. The CSN was the product of a Government-owned process and the time taken for its completion depended on the national planning cycle and on the quantity and diversity of inputs required. While only nine CSNs had been completed, the CSNs were in advanced stages of completion or approval in another 34 countries. The CSN process had been initiated and was in earlier stages in another 43 countries. The CSN process was thus active in a total of 86 countries, showing steady progress in fact.

113. Regarding capacity-building for national execution, the training at the country level included government counterparts involved in national execution. The UNDP mission statement would certainly stress capacity-building as part of the enabling environment for sustainable human development. National implementation units were necessary at the present time to ensure compliance with reporting requirements for national execution.

114. The Associate Administrator provided further data on gender balance in UNDP. Currently, 32 per cent of Professionals were women. The overall targets were for 38 per cent in 1997 and 50 per cent by the year 2000. Specific gender targets for 1997 were for women to represent 20 per cent of staff at the D-2 level, 20 per cent of staff at the D-1 level and for 30 out of 132 resident representatives to be women.

Levels attained in 1996 showed that: 20 per cent of staff at the D-2 level and 13 per cent at the D-1 level were women. Of 132 resident representatives in 1996, there were 25 women.

115. With regard to collaboration with the World Bank, a joint letter had been sent by the Administrator and the President of the Bank to resident representatives on means to enhance country-level cooperation. The International Monetary Fund was also interested in developing closer collaboration with UNDP at the country level. Resources mobilization at the country level was an important operational concern of UNDP.

116. With respect to evaluation, in his introductory statement to the Economic and Social Council, the Administrator could include additional information on that subject, particularly in light of the discussions held at the second regular session 1996.

117. The Associate Administrator clarified that conference follow-up was taking place at the global level in the three inter-agency task forces (IATFs) and the newly approved committee on the empowerment and advancement of women and at the national level through the thematic groups under the leadership of resident coordinators. The IATFs were in the process of producing concrete outputs such as guidelines for resident coordinators. The thematic groups at the national level would lead eventually to coordinated or joint operational activities in support of conference outcomes.

118. Inter-agency follow-up to Habitat II was expected to be undertaken within the existing IATFs, whose work programme could be adjusted to accommodate the conference outcomes. UNDP was actively involved in preparations for the conference and had seconded two staff members to its secretariat. The Secretary General had pointed out at the ACC that as a United Nations System conference, the World Food Summit should receive support from the whole system in preparation and follow-up. The Administrator had co-signed, with other JCGP executive heads, a statement on world food security to the Bureau of the Inter-sessional Working Group of the Committee on World Food Security, which was preparing the World Food Summit.

119. With regard to decentralization, resident representatives could currently approve up to $1 million for single projects or programmes. Under the successor programming arrangements, decentralization with accountability would be enhanced, as subsequent discussions at the Executive Board would reveal. There were nine centres of experimentation where additional decentralization was being tried out prior to its eventual mainstreaming.

120. Finally, regarding humanitarian activities, the Associate Administrator pointed out the close relationship existing between UNDP and DHA, both multilaterally through the IASC as well as bilaterally through joint working groups. Collaborative work was also being undertaken with the World Bank in joint preparations for post-conflict recovery in Liberia. The Associate Administrator also confirmed that the focus of UNDP programme activity was on emergency

and crisis prevention, appropriate development assistance during crisis and on recovery, not on relief. He cited the examples of UNDP assistance in area development programmes reintegrating displaced persons: in Bosnia and Herzogovina, Cambodia, Central America, Mozambique and Ukraine, among others. He noted that the Administrator had assigned high priority to the question of coordination of resource mobilization for relief with mobilization for development. In that respect, the work of CCPOQ was important in bringing together the development agencies and the World Bank while the IASC represented primarily the relief partners. The open exchange of information between those two groups was seen as contributing to the joint examination of roles and resource mobilization, distinguishing between the various fund-raising mechanisms and the important role of the resident coordinator in mobilizing resources at the country level.

121. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked delegations for the critical but constructive comments made during the discussion. He informed the Executive Board about the discussion of the resident coordinator system at the recent JCGP High-level Meeting, based on comments provided by the JCGP partner organizations to the Administrator. It was agreed that UNDP would undertake an analysis of the consolidated comments and would circulate the results and follow-up actions. In future, the agencies would also be involved in the performance evaluations of the resident coordinators. In that context, he also confirmed that the newly designated UNFPA representatives would operate within the resident coordinator system, which UNFPA continued to support fully.

122. With regard to questions about the effectiveness of the programme approach, he explained that UNFPA experiences with the approach, which had been employed since 1977 through the formulation of country programmes, had been satisfactory and had facilitated the coherent utilization of programme funds. Regarding UNFPA work on revised guidelines on national execution, he stressed that UNFPA saw it as a system-wide effort that proceeded in close consultation with UNDP. The revised guidelines would be shared with the Fund's partners in CCPOQ and JCGP for comments. UNFPA would also continue its efforts to enhance national capacity-building in all UNFPA-funded programme activities, including country-level training.

123. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) expressed his agreement with concerns that field-level follow-up to the major international conferences and summits required increased efforts. He mentioned that feedback from UNFPA offices indicated that the guidelines for the resident coordinator system on the implementation of the ICPD were being used through the work of theme groups under the guidance of the resident coordinator in many countries. UNFPA was awaiting further comments from its country offices to monitor the use of the guidelines over time. In response to a query about the CSN, he confirmed that it was the process for creating a common development vision and that JCGP was not instituting any parallel mechanisms through the common country assessment.

124. Concerning the relevance of national population councils or units, UNFPA had undertaken evaluations of such coordinating mechanisms and, with

few country-specific exceptions, had found them useful in the formulation of population policies and the coordination of external assistance. The main challenge ahead was for such institutions to extend their work beyond the traditional population sector in follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action. On resource mobilization, he agreed on the need for intensified fund-raising efforts. He stated that the selection of advocacy as one of the core post-ICPD programme areas for UNFPA had increased activities to raise awareness at the field level.

125. Regarding inputs to the upcoming Habitat II and the World Food Summit, he explained that UNFPA had seconded a technical officer to assist in preparations for Habitat II and had actively participated in all preparatory meetings. For the World Food Summit, the executive heads of the JCGP partner organizations had issued a joint statement to highlight issues related to food security, which should receive further attention in the draft plan of action, such as food access issues, reproductive health and women's empowerment. With regard to the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa, he stated that UNFPA had raised the absence of population issues from the documents at the recent meeting of the Steering Committee on the Special Initiative. After discussions, the Steering Committee had decided to integrate gender and population as cross-cutting themes in the implementation plans and to include reproductive health specifically as a component of health-sector reform. The new understanding had been affirmed by ACC at its meeting in April.

126. Concerning collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) responded that UNFPA had concluded an agreement with the World Bank that information gathered in preparation for country programmes would be shared between the organizations in order to avoid any duplication of work and provide a common basis for country-level activities. In addition, joint projects were being implemented in many countries. He emphasized that despite the absence of formal agreements, meaningful consultations were regularly held at all levels of the two organizations. He confirmed that UNFPA had been working closely for two decades with the Asian Development Bank and had also concluded an agreement with the African Development Bank.

127. The Executive Board took note of the reports. At the suggestion of one delegation, it was agreed that the present reports would be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council with, as annexes: (a) the extract of the report on the annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board dealing with the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment; (b) the extract of the report on the annual session of the Board dealing with the implementation of programming arrangements; and (c) the extract of the report on the second regular session 1996 of the Board dealing with evaluation.

VI. HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

128. The Director for Finance, Personnel and Administration of UNFPA, speaking on behalf of both UNDP and UNFPA, reported on the progress being made by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to harmonize their budget presentations. She reminded delegations of the understanding that had been widely supported at the second regular session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, which acknowledged that, as a way of promoting understanding and better decision-making, the harmonization of budgets meant making them more similar in content and presentation and in the underlying principles employed in the preparation of accounts and budgets. She pointed out that similarity did not mean sameness.

129. The Director reported that work on that basis was proceeding. She said that the current areas of focus were: assessing the applicability to UNDP and UNFPA of the recently adopted integrated budget approach of UNICEF; defining the delineation between programme activities, programme support and administrative costs; reconciling styles of presentation, specifically concerning those for resource utilization; harmonizing budgetary classifications; and adopting a common terminology.

130. The Director asked the Executive Board to endorse the timetable for carrying out the work that had recently been approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in its decision 1996/16. That timetable foresaw presenting a joint report to the Economic and Social Council at its forthcoming session in summer 1996; an oral progress report, along with working papers, at the third regular session 1996 of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board; and initial proposals on harmonization to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its first regular session 1997, after having passed the proposals through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

131. The oral progress report made to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at the third regular session 1996 would include a comparison of budget presentations and of definitions of terms as well as steps needed for further harmonization. The eventual proposals would take account of the discussions held in the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards. The aim would be to use the harmonization proposals, once agreed to by the Executive Board, for the presentation of the biennial budgets for 1998-1999, as far as possible. The Director also advised the Board that during the discussion on budget harmonization at the UNICEF Executive Board it had been agreed to have an intersessional briefing on the subject.

132. The delegations who spoke following the Director's statement stressed the great importance they all placed on the harmonization of the budgets of the three organizations. Several of them mentioned that they understood how difficult that harmonization was; however, some felt that the work was not proceeding as rapidly as they had hoped. One delegation expressed the position of its Government, which was that if harmonization was not achieved, it would adversely affect its support to the organizations involved. Some delegations wondered whether the timetable proposed was

realistic, given the complexities of the situation. One delegation, noting that the agenda of the ACABQ was already set, asked if it was feasible to submit the proposals through ACABQ.

133. In her reply, the Director said that UNDP and UNFPA had made it a point to keep the Executive Board informed of the progress that was being made on budget harmonization. A progress report, with working papers, had been presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996 six weeks earlier, in March 1996. The working group on harmonization set up by the three organizations was now focusing on having its initial proposals ready for submission to the Board at its first regular session in 1997, after submission to ACABQ.

134. Seconded by the Associate Administrator of UNDP, the Director pointed out that one of the difficulties encountered had been that UNICEF had just recently adopted its own new integrated budget presentation, covering only the headquarters and regional office budgets, not the country offices. That had inevitably slowed down the process. However, both UNDP and UNFPA felt strongly that the proposed timetable should be adhered to if harmonized budget presentations were to be presented for 1998-1999. Moreover, in the interest of harmonization, all three organizations should be working on the same schedule. The Director reiterated that harmonization did not require exactly the same presentations. But it did mean that the budgets would be similar, comparable and transparent, as pointed out by delegations during discussions at the annual session as well as at the second regular session 1996. That was a goal to which all three organizations were sincerely committed, and the proposed timetable would allow them to reach that goal.

135. Several delegations acknowledged the difficulties created by the new integrated budget for UNICEF. Two delegations expressed the view that that new budget was, in and of itself, an improvement in that organization's budget presentation. However, some delegations stressed that they did not want further difficulties to delay the progress and results they all felt were essential. On that understanding, it would be possible to endorse the proposed timetable as requested.

136. The Executive Board, therefore, noted with appreciation the commitment expressed by both UNDP and UNFPA to achieve harmonized budgetary procedures and stressed the importance of putting the new procedures in place so they would take effect starting with the budgets for the biennium 1998-1999. The Board further emphasized the importance of making the procedures, which would apply to UNICEF as well, go as far towards harmonization, transparency and comparability as possible. The Board endorsed the timetable presented by the Director on behalf of both UNDP and UNFPA as contained in paragraph three above and already endorsed by the Executive Board of UNICEF.

137. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts, with the comments made thereon.

UNDP SEGMENT

VII. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS

A. Annual report

138. The Administrator introduced his annual report for 1995 (DP/1996/18 and Add. 1-4). His presentation was divided into three parts: (a) steps taken to create an enabling environment within UNDP to promote and implement the initiatives for change, adopted by the Executive Board in decision 94/14, including information on programme focus, resource mobilization, management, human resources, and system-wide coordination; (b) programme results, including the reorientation of programmes, financial status of the programme and resource planning for the next period; and (c) future challenges.

139. Within the scope of the last item, the Administrator informed the Executive Board that UNDP planned to intensify its efforts to transform itself. New mechanisms had been instituted, such as the Executive Committee and a committee on the management of change. UNDP senior managers had also decided to launch Project UNDP 2001, an instrument that would focus on systemic issues that impeded the overall reform programme. However, core resources had declined in 1995 and he was now calling on the Board to form a strategic partnership with UNDP in order to achieve the $1.1 billion annual funding target. He stated that UNDP looked forward to future discussions on the recent Assessment of UNDP, sponsored by the Governments of Denmark, India, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, of which an executive summary was available to the Board. The 1996-1997 UNDP Plan and additional background information were made available to the Board. The Administrator also introduced the revised UNDP draft mission statement, which was before the Board for approval.

140. Forty-five delegations took the floor to speak on the item, thanking the Administrator for his statement and the additional documentation provided for the meeting. Most speakers said they had found the statement comprehensive and enlightening and commended the Administrator and his colleagues on their efforts to create an enabling environment for change in UNDP.

Programme focus

141. In their comments on the annual report of the Administrator, delegations in general said that the documentation contained useful information on the work of UNDP under the five operational objectives of the 1995 UNDP Plan. They noted with appreciation the progress made by UNDP in implementing the initiatives for change and in giving substance to the four areas of focus at the programme level. Virtually all delegations reaffirmed their support for the focus areas and attached particular importance to the priority being given to the thematic area of poverty

eradication and the functional area of capacity development within the framework of sustainable human development. One observer delegation commented that the attention of UNDP to the subject of governance should not be to the detriment of UNDP focus areas, in particular poverty eradication. The importance of developing quantitative goals for achieving poverty eradication was mentioned. Many stated that UNDP needed to concentrate its scarce resources further in areas where it had a comparative advantage and supported the efforts it was making to define "the focus within the focus". In that respect, the informal consultations with Board members initiated by the Bureau for Programme Policy and Support were proving to be useful.

142. Many delegations provided illustrations of the work being done by their countries in the framework of sustainable human development (SHD) and with UNDP support. One delegation was critical of the fact that, so far, gender-specific issues represented only a small fraction of UNDP expenditures on SHD areas and called for early action to develop a greater number of gender-specific programmes. Another delegation was concerned that, in building its substantive capabilities, UNDP might duplicate the research and technical capabilities that existed in other institutions. Food security, forestry and development policy research, for example, were subjects covered by other agencies.

Documentation

143. Many speakers remarked that while the documentation was comprehensive and complied with various reporting requirements, it was difficult to derive from it an overall picture of the focus of UNDP work. Several stated that the report should be more analytic and problem-oriented. One delegation felt the report should consist essentially of brief analyses of statistical data on programme trends at the country level, particularly as they related to Executive Board decisions. Another speaker suggested it should also focus on lessons learned and impact assessment while a third suggested the inclusion of a comparative advantage analysis of results against targets.

144. One delegation suggested that the 1996-1997 UNDP Plan might provide a good framework for monitoring and reporting on organizational activities since it defined specific objectives, key results areas and performance indicators. One observer delegation stated that it was necessary to have time to analyse the documents that were circulated in the room and that it would comment on them in the future. Another delegation pointed out that his delegation had previously proposed an alternative format for the annual report.

Resources

145. Most delegations commented on the decline in core resources in real terms during 1995 and called for greater efforts to make UNDP more attractive to donors. Some speakers observed that, while the reform process under the initiatives for change had intensified, the core funds to

translate those reforms into high-impact programmes were diminishing. A number of delegations expressed their concern that UNDP might come to rely too much on non-core resources that did not provide an appropriate basis for the operations of a multilateral agency. In that context, several commented on the number of trust funds established during 1995 and enquired about the administrative costs, management implications and overall cost-effectiveness of such arrangements. One delegation enquired whether UNDP had developed a core funding strategy comparable to the non-core strategy mentioned in document DP/1996/18. He also raised the issue of burden-sharing. Several delegations confirmed that they would maintain their core contributions for 1996 at 1995 levels. One speaker called for the establishment of a special task force under the Administrator to deal with the question of core resource mobilization.

146. Several delegations from the African regional group reflected their concern that declining UNDP resources could negatively affect programmes in their region, given the difficulty seen in attracting other sources of financing. Several other speakers requested that UNDP activities with relation to economies in transition be more intensive and predictable.

147. It was suggested by one delegation that, in order to leverage its modest funds, UNDP should engage more aggressively in co-financing large programmes with the multilateral financial institutions, in particular components relating to capacity development and other SHD areas. A few delegations said they looked forward to receiving at the September 1996 session of the Executive Board the findings of the evaluation of co-financing that UNDP had recently commissioned. One delegation, supported by another, requested the Administrator, in accordance with decision 95/28, to provide information on the impact of the quality of programme activities of UNDP, the relationship between core and non-core resources, and review the costs, including staff costs, involved in providing operational and administrative support to non-core activities. One observer delegation stressed the excellent performance of the Latin American region in co-financing.

148. One observer delegation stated that in the allocation of resources, new categories of countries should not be introduced since there was no legal basis for a possible reclassification.

Strengthening country offices

149. Many speakers stressed that it was essential to continue improving the services and support provided to country offices by UNDP headquarters. In that respect, the further restructuring of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), the provision of timely and technically sound guidance to country offices, efficient programming procedures and the elimination of micro-management and unnecessary requests for information by headquarters should be achieved rapidly. It was generally felt that empowering country offices by connecting them with appropriate human and technical resources, training opportunities, information and technical expertise was the key to improved performance at the country level.

150. One delegation urged that similar attention be given to strengthening UNDP focal points in programme countries without a UNDP country office. Others requested more flexibility for country offices in applying the SHD programming framework to national circumstances and conditions.

Coordination

151. Many speakers commented on the efforts of UNDP to support enhanced coordination in the operational activities of the United Nations system within the framework of the triennial policy review of operational activities for development and by improving its support to the resident coordinator system. It was agreed that establishing policy and operational complementarity between UNDP and the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system was to be a desirable, if ambitious goal. Coordination with the multilateral financial institutions was also important. Referring to emergency situations, several speakers observed that the clear definition and effective discharge of the role of UNDP, on the one hand, and those of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and the relief agencies on the other, should be pursued. In that respect, the intention of UNDP to collaborate with DHA within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 96/56 was welcomed by one delegation. The informative remarks of the Administrator in his opening statement concerning the development aspects of the role of UNDP in emergencies were appreciated by a number of speakers.

152. Some delegations, however, considered it essential to determine whether the resident coordinator system was functioning effectively; what the obstacles to better performance were; and how best to involve resident coordinators themselves more fully in efforts to enhance the system. One delegation enquired when the evaluation of UNDP support to the resident coordinator system would be available. One or two speakers said they hoped that efforts to promote policy coherence at United Nations headquarters would not divert attention from programme matters at the country level. One delegation enquired whether the Administrator had experienced any difficulty in combining his role as head of UNDP with the coordination responsibilities entrusted to him by the Secretary-General. Others stated that coordination was ultimately the responsibility of recipient Governments and that UNDP should focus on strengthening national coordination capacity.

153. One delegation referred to the importance of the country strategy note and urged UNDP to persuade more countries to adopt that coordination tool. A number of speakers commended UNDP on the role it played in promoting national reconciliation and reconstruction in countries in crisis. Others expressed their support for the work of UNDP in promoting the harmonization of programme and budget matters in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy.

Accountability

154. Delegations emphasized the importance of sustaining ongoing efforts to strengthen managerial, financial, individual and substantive

accountability in UNDP and said the organization had made important strides in that area. The improved audit compliance rate cited in document DP/1996/18 was commendable, as were recent measures to enhance individual accountability. On the other hand, one or two delegations observed in respect of evaluation that the relevant section of the latter report had evidently been prepared before the second regular session 1996 of the Executive Board since it did not reflect issues of compliance and impact assessment discussed at that meeting. One delegation requested that the programme impact and performance assessment exercise undertaken by UNDP be tested in more countries.

155. A few delegations had questions about how audits were conducted in UNDP and how their findings could be made available to the Executive Board. One speaker sought clarification of the need for the special audits mentioned in document DP/1996/18.

156. In a proposal read on behalf of eleven other delegations, one speaker stated that, against a background of resource constraints and in order to maximize resources available for programming, the Executive Board should use the annual examination of the budget to assess carefully the scope for further savings. A precondition for that assessment would be to receive precise information pertaining to cost segments at headquarters in New York including, inter alia, staff, rent and other relevant expenses. He requested that such information be made available in a transparent, user-friendly and timely manner in order to facilitate further discussion at the third regular session 1996 of the Board. Offering support for that proposal, another delegation, however, stressed the need to maintain a strong management structure at UNDP headquarters.

Management of change

157. Delegations noted with interest the new measures and mechanisms announced by the Administrator for intensifying change in UNDP. Several remarked that accelerating the reform process while ensuring that day-to-day operations remained intact, was desirable. Some delegations requested further information about the role of the process consultants contracted by UNDP to assist in the management of change. One speaker expressed the view that the change process should continue to be conducted transparently, as had so far been the case.

United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

158. Speaking for the African Group, one delegation welcomed the elaboration of the role of UNDP in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. He also noted the success of round-table meetings for several African countries during 1995 and expressed the hope that commitments would lead to disbursements. Referring to the Special Initiative, another speaker enquired about the extent of consultations with Governments prior to its launch and whether resources for its implementation were assured. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, responded to those other questions about the Special Initiative in a separate presentation.

Other matters

159. A number of delegations reaffirmed the importance they attached to technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and offered illustrations of the role their countries played in that respect. The omission of references to TCDC in document DP/1996/18 was regretted. Several speakers also mentioned the importance of national execution in their countries and one requested that consideration be given to promoting exchanges of experience among national execution units in different countries. One speaker requested that UNDP report to the first regular session 1996 on information-sharing among regions.

160. Other issues raised by delegations related to the gender balance of Professional staff in UNDP; the use by UNDP of information available from United Nations research bodies; and the interest in receiving pertinent publications prior to their being received by the media. One delegation noted that some recent reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had contained information relevant to UNDP, and asked what form of cooperation existed between the Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning and JIU.

161. One delegation requested that UNDP open an office in his country.

Responses by the Administrator

162. The Administrator provided answers to questions and further information at various intervals during the debate. On the question of resources, he reiterated that UNDP considered core funds to be the bedrock of its operations. He clarified that UNDP had always had a strategy for mobilizing core resources. The reason for mentioning the non-core funding strategy in document DP/1996/18 was that it was a new initiative developed in 1995. Concerning the proliferation of trust funds, he stated that UNDP was keeping the matter under review and was also encouraging third-party cost-sharing as a complement to trust funds. Regarding more aggressive approaches to major donors, experience showed that the Administrator could only go so far in that direction without alienating voluntary contributors. It was for that reason that he was now proposing to form a strategic partnership with the Executive Board for reaching the $3.3 billion target. He observed that there had been a default in the bargain struck over UNDP reform, and he sympathized with programme countries that felt they had adopted major changes seemingly to little avail.

163. On the issue of documentation, he agreed that the system of annual reporting needed to be improved. He accepted that a solution could be to merge the reporting and planning processes in UNDP. The more objective methods being developed for monitoring performance under the 1996-1997 UNDP Plan could lend themselves to the production of higher quality reports to the Executive Board.

164. In terms of achieving greater programme focus, he reminded members that he had conveyed his views on that subject in a previous address. Within the first priority area of poverty eradication, UNDP was now concentrating its support on (a) the development of national anti-poverty

policies and (b) the development of income opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for the poor. He agreed that quantitative goals for measuring poverty eradication were essential and cited a recent initiative of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) in that area as a significant step forward. As far as UNDP interest in forestry, food security and other technical areas was concerned, he clarified that there was no duplication of effort between UNDP and the technical agencies and other international organizations. UNDP did not at all seek to be a leader in such technical fields; it sought only to develop such capacity of its own as was needed to appraise with some degree of competence the programmes in those areas that it was asked to fund.

165. On coordination, he agreed that the current picture presented by the resident coordinator system was mixed and pointed out that the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council would take up the issue. He stressed that the purpose of seeking policy coherence at the global level was precisely to strengthen country-level activities involving United Nations system partners. With respect to his role as Special Coordinator, he said he had not experienced any particular difficulty in combining the function with his duties as Administrator. Since UNDP was pivotal to the coordination of United Nations development activities, the two functions went together quite naturally.

166. On other matters, the Administrator provided clarifications concerning UNDP staff costs in relation to total income, the role of the Programme Management and Oversight Committee and the UNDP system of management audits. In response to a specific question about collaboration with non-governmental organizations, he stated that UNDP would both use them for direct programme implementation and would also help to build their capacities. Concerning the numbers of projects in the UNDP portfolio in 1995, he stated that until 1995, those numbers had been declining but they had risen in that year for reasons which UNDP was now trying to establish. Referring to special audits, he explained that they were audits that went beyond the inspections that UNDP carried out on a regular basis. However, he emphasized that the conduct of a special audit did not in itself imply that there were any grounds for major concern. With regard to the JIU reports, the Administrator confirmed that the recommendations were reviewed by UNDP and found to be useful.

167. Regarding gender balance in UNDP, he stated that 32 per cent of Professional staff in 1996 were women. The aim was to achieve gender equality in the next four to five years as had been noted in the discussion on agenda item 5 (see paragraph 114).

168. The Secretary, in response to a query concerning the late issuance of the statistical annex to the annual report (DP/1996//18/Add. 4), noted that the information included in the annex was obtained from non-UNDP sources, who were unable to make that information available to UNDP until after the close of their financial year. In the past, the addendum on statistical information had been available only in a provisional form at the annual session; in efforts to streamline its work, the Executive Board now submitted information for the year in question in its final form at the

earliest possible opportunity. The delay in receiving the information in UNDP for the annual session 1996 had been complicated by the early date on which the session was being held.

169. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Administrator for 1996 (DP/1996/18 and Add.1, 3 and 4, taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion of the item as reflected in the report on the session.

B. UNDP mission statement

170. Quite a number of delegations expressed their appreciation for, and approval of, the revised mission statement proposed by UNDP. Two or three delegations said they had some continuing concerns about the wording of certain paragraphs. It was agreed to hold an informal meeting among interested delegations during the current session in order to try to resolve such remaining concerns.

171. The Administrator noted that the Executive Board had had several opportunities to review the draft statement, which was an internal document and not intended to be an official document. The text before it at the current session had been extensively revised to take into account the valuable comments of various members. The present version, as he had said in his opening address, reflected a strong consensus within the organization and was completely consistent with the legislative framework provided by the Board itself. It would in no way change the mandate and priorities of the Programme. It was important that the Executive Board approve the statement as expeditiously as possible so that it could be given to the staff of UNDP as their guide and inspiration.

172. Following the informal meeting, the revised draft of the UNDP mission statement was circulated to the Executive Board for its approval.

173. The representative of one delegation noted that although his was a Spanish-speaking delegation, he had been asked to endorse a text that had been presented in English only. It was agreed that, in view of the understanding reached during the informal consultations held earlier in the year on the mission statement and the discussions at the current session, the secretariat would consult with representatives of interested delegations in New York before the mission statement was issued in languages.

174. One delegation stated that his reservations concerning paragraph 4 had not been answered in the text, specifically the use of the term "good governance". He would have preferred that the term "transparent and accountable governance" be used instead of "good governance". Moreover, his delegation had found the time available for consultation and discussion on the item insufficient. That view was supported by one observer delegation.

175. Speaking as coordinator of the Asian group, one delegation stated that she had, indeed, hoped for more time to complete consultations in the group. Progress had been made in negotiating language that could be

broadly acceptable to all members; and she regretted therefore that more time had not been made available to satisfy the concerns of all members of the group.

176. The Vice-President, who had been chairing the meeting, stated that he had sought to expedite discussion of the item, taking into account all the views that had been expressed on the UNDP mission statement during previous sessions and informally.

177. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/29. Mission statement of the United Nations Development Programme

The Executive Board

Endorses the mission statement attached as an annex to the present decision, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, as reflected in the report on agenda item 7 of the session.

15 May 1996

Annex

MISSION STATEMENT

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED
...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,
... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends
... to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,
have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims ....

From the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations

UNDP is part of the United Nations and upholds the vision of the United Nations Charter. It is committed to the principle that development is inseparable from the quest for peace and human security and that the United Nations must be a strong force for development as well as peace.

UNDP's mission is to help countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable human development by assisting them to build their capacity to design and carry out development programmes in poverty eradication, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods, the empowerment of women and the protection and regeneration of the environment, giving first priority to poverty eradication.

UNDP also acts to help the United Nations family to become a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development and works to strengthen international cooperation for sustainable human development.

UNDP, at the request of governments and in support of its areas of focus, assists in building capacity for good governance, popular participation, private and public sector development and growth with equity, stressing that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development within the United Nations system.

UNDP resident representatives normally serve as resident coordinators of the operational activities of the United Nations system, supporting at the request of governments the coordination of development and humanitarian assistance. Resident coordinators also help to orchestrate the full intellectual and technical resources of the United Nations system in support of national development.

UNDP strives to be an effective development partner for the United Nations relief agencies, working to sustain livelihoods while they seek to sustain lives. It acts to help countries to prepare for, avoid and manage complex emergencies and disasters.

UNDP draws on expertise from around the world, including from developing countries, United Nations specialized agencies, civil society organizations and research institutes.

UNDP supports South-South cooperation by actively promoting the exchange of experience among developing countries.

UNDP supports, within its areas of focus, technology transfer, adaptation, and access to the most effective technology.

UNDP receives voluntary contributions from nearly every country in the world. **UNDP** seeks to ensure a predictable flow of resources to support its programmes. It provides grant funds through criteria based on universality that strongly favour low-income countries, particularly the least developed.

UNDP is politically neutral and its cooperation is impartial. It seeks to conduct its work in a manner transparent and accountable to all its stakeholders.

UNDP is committed to a process of continuing self-evaluation and reform. It aims to improve its own efficiency and effectiveness and to assist the United Nations system in becoming a stronger force for the benefit of the people and countries of the world.

UNDP will continue to support an international development cooperation framework that responds to changing global, regional and national circumstances.

C. United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

178. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the report of the Administrator on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) in the 1990s (DP/1996/20). She outlined the main elements of UNDP support, as contained in the report, to the activities of UN-NADAF, including support to human resource development efforts, for the establishment of the African Economic Community, capacity-building and strategic planning, private sector development, the Panel of High-Level Personalities on African Development, the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, and the follow-up to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. UNDP had contributed its efforts to ensuring that UN-NADAF was effectively implemented and that African economic recovery and development was kept as a top priority of the United Nations. The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa would give new impetus to UN-NADAF. Details of the role of UNDP in the Special Initiative were noted in document DP/1996/20. UNDP would help to monitor the implementation of the Special Initiative and report to the Administrative Committee on Coordination through the Administrator's role as co-chair of the Steering Group. UNDP would have primary responsibility for the segment on governance.

179. One delegation said his Government would support the Special Initiative on Africa and in that regard, sought the collaboration and guidance of resident representatives. The speaker noted that his Government could not yet announce an exact financial figure but he felt that the priorities of the Special Initiative were in line with those of his Government. His Government had already made financial contributions to trust funds set up to benefit confidence-building measures in Africa as well as the Organization of African Unity peace fund. Regional initiatives from Africa on conflict prevention and confidence-building measures would be most welcome. The speaker stated that a comprehensive approach was needed for the Special Initiative and hoped that the actions of UNDP would be coordinated with those of other organizations. His delegation was also eager to include technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) in the Special Initiative and informed the Executive Board of a regional workshop on TCDC among African and Asian countries that would be held in July 1996. He also announced that a second conference on African Development would be held in Tokyo in 1998, with a preparatory meeting to be held in 1997. A preparatory seminar for the mid-term review of UN-NADAF would take place in Tokyo in August 1996, with the participation of African and Asian countries, international financial institutions and development cooperation institutions, including UNDP.

180. While according to several delegations UN-NADAF had not shown significant results to date, many speakers thanked UNDP for its efforts to implement UN-NADAF-related activities. UNDP was asked to continue to assist United Nations bodies engaged in support to UN-NADAF. One delegation appealed to UNDP to assist in raising additional funding for his country. Two speakers emphasized the need to reduce arms flows to Africa.

181. One delegation expressed concern about the effect of reduced staff in the Regional Bureau for Africa on the ability of UNDP to carry out its commitments to UN-NADAF.

182. Several delegations underlined that the Special Initiative on Africa was not a replacement of UN-NADAF, but rather an extension of it, which required the committed action of all partners involved. The collaboration between the Bretton Woods institutions and United Nations organizations was encouraged and welcomed. The resource mobilization situation must be better clarified. Some delegations asked for more information on the role of UNDP in the Special Initiative and the potential roles of donors. Structured roles for both donors and recipients would be welcomed.

183. The representative of the Joint Inspection Unit noted the results of a recent study conducted by the Unit regarding UN-NADAF, which would be reported to the Committee on Programme Coordination. The Assistant Administrator thanked the Government of Norway for support to UNDP work in governance in Africa and expressed appreciation to the Government of Japan for its contributions to TCDC between Asia and Africa. In response to questions raised, she stated that consultations at the country level, with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, and with the Bretton Woods institutions, would help to define better the work of the Special Initiative on Africa and determine the appropriate means to undertake resource mobilization. UNDP and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) would work together to track progress of the Special Initiative. Governance was a key initiative. She expressed support for the proposal of the Joint Inspection Unit that in order to strengthen UN-NADAF, ECA needed to have a larger role.

184. She also informed the Executive Board that private sector forums held in conjunction with round-table meetings on Angola and Namibia had been successful in attracting private investments. The format would be used in future round-table meetings, possibly with the involvement of NGOs as well.

185. With regard to the Special Initiative on Africa, she stated that it brought programme content, through measurable and identifiable outputs, to UN-NADAF. The aims of the Special Initiative were consistent with the priorities of Africa and were linked with sustainable human development.

186. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Administrator on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (DP/1996/20).

VIII. MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

A. Implementation of the successor programming arrangements

187. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) introduced the note by the Administrator on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements (DP/1996/21), which explained how Executive Board decision 95/23 was being put into operation. He expressed great satisfaction about the very constructive dialogue enjoyed so far with Executive Board members in relation to the item.

188. In his statement, the Assistant Administrator outlined some of the main areas where new arrangements represented changes with the past: the system offered more flexibility, more emphasis on programme quality; it was performance-based and gave more authority to the country level. Rules on national execution, programme approach and co-financing were being revised in the context of developing the new programming arrangements. Other steps taken by UNDP were: provision of technical guidance to country offices on key substantive areas; reinforcing of collaboration with specialized agencies; and piloting of resource networks on sustainable human development thematic areas. A revised format for reporting to the Executive Board on the review of country activities would provide details of specific programme activities and analysis of the overall impact of UNDP intervention on development in the respective countries.

189. The Assistant Administrator gave specific comments on three of the categories for resource allocation: regional programmes, countries in special development situations, and resources for support to resident coordinators.

190. The Manual for the programming of UNDP resources (Part II) was distributed to the Executive Board.

Debate

191. In the debate that followed, many speakers commended the statement by the Assistant Administrator for clarifying questions raised earlier. The need for effective and efficient management of development funds was underlined. One speaker called for all donors to increase substantively their official development assistance in the future. Resources managed by UNDP must be used as a catalyst that would encourage multilateral and bilateral donors to contribute to UNDP programmes and projects. In that light, the guidelines should include more information about the strategy and concrete measures that UNDP would undertake in country programming.

Country-level programming (lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2)

192. Many delegations emphasized the central role of national Governments in designing and approving programmes in their countries. The updated guidelines were a positive step towards the implementation by UNDP of the successor programming arrangements and the flexibility in application to different country situations was welcomed. One delegation asked for more time to examine the guidelines before endorsing them, and suggested that the country cooperation framework (CCF) as a national plan should be better reflected in the guidelines. One observer delegation said that they noticed a growing complexity in the programming process of UNDP, characterized by the new programme documents, emerging supervisory bodies and numerous instances of evaluation in the context of decreasing allocation of resources.

193. Some speakers sought clarification about the role of the advisory note in the programming process and expressed concern about a possible diminishing of the authority of national Governments. Another speaker stated that the consultations referred to in paragraph 5 (b) of document DP/1996/21 had not been previously agreed and that the procedures stated in paragraph 5 (c), in which various organizations were invited to the local programme appraisal committees for reviewing the CCF were unacceptable. One speaker suggested that Governments could proceed with preparation of country programmes and identification of needs and priorities even before the advisory note was completed. Other delegations supported the involvement of civil society in the preparation of the advisory note and encouraged UNDP to involve those organizations as much as possible. UNDP should, however, maintain strict neutrality in the selection of the appropriate civil organizations with which to consult. The involvement of multilateral and bilateral donors in the local Programme Advisory Committee was also welcomed by some delegations while others asked for clarification of the role of the committee. One delegation stated that it would not be possible for his Government to involve other multilateral or bilateral donors in the preparation and review of the CCF. He also stressed the need for prior concurrence of Governments before constituting local programme advisory committees, which should essentially consist of UNDP and host Government officials.

194. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, one delegation emphasized the need to use results in a productive way and hoped that reports would be critical and analytical. Several delegations supported the issuance of review reports on a particular country to the Executive Board every four years rather than on a biennial basis as envisaged in the report while one delegation favoured more frequent reviews. A question was raised about whether reports should be standardized. One observer delegation stated that the monitoring of the evaluation system for allocation of additional resources was excessive and that the guidelines and procedures for the allocation of resources should be reconsidered, in order to discontinue redundant bodies and procedures.

195. One delegation questioned whether the assignment of 60 per cent of base country-level target resource allocations from core (TRAC) resources would still allow flexibility of the core fund.

Regional programming (line 1.2)

196. Some delegations asked for more clarification on the role of regional economic commissions as well as on the regional cooperation framework referred to in document DP/1996/21. The use of the word "strategy" should be avoided. It was noted that the focus of the regional programme must be sharpened to concentrate on activities that were more effectively carried out at the regional level, such as those in the environment and HIV/AIDS. One delegation asked how the regional dimension could be incorporated into country strategy notes since the notes were not universal.

Programming in countries in special development situations (line 1.1.3)

197. Delegations commented favourably on the guidelines developed for use of line 1.1.3. One delegation, on behalf of others, while welcoming the initiative to elaborate the guidelines, said it would be useful if UNDP could clarify further the scope of the new arrangements and the emphasis placed on prevention and rehabilitation versus relief activities. The delegation cited the importance attached to the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and asked UNDP to discuss the new proposed guidelines with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), created by the resolution, in particular the proposal to develop common strategic frameworks to guide resource allocation. UNDP should then report to the Executive Board on the outcome of the discussions in the context of the follow-up to the Council resolution. In particular, the proposal on resource allocation would need to be clarified as it related to existing funding mechanisms, including the Consolidated Appeals Process. It was also suggested that the proposal by UNDP to strengthen the coordination function in response to sudden crises be discussed among agencies. Elaboration of the comparative advantage of UNDP and suggestions and options on its specific role and operational responsibilities in emergencies would be welcomed. Some delegations underlined the need for UNDP to concentrate on its development dimension in emergency situations. That meant focusing on prevention and disaster preparedness as a regular part of the development agenda and enhancing stabilization and sustainability in the post-emergency situation. The response of UNDP in emergencies was part of a wider framework of an integrated approach to crisis management. Through its central role in development and the resident coordinator system, UNDP had a key role to play in bringing different actors together. In the disbursements of funds under line 1.1.3, UNDP would need to look into the role of different actors, including itself, and assess which had the best capacity to implement the activities needed.

198. The use of experience and lessons learned in developing the guidelines was welcomed. UNDP was encouraged to work closely with other relevant actors, such as the World Bank on post-emergency rehabilitation or with UNHCR in contingency planning in response to pending crisis situations. The resident representative played an important role in coordinating the United Nations system response through the United Nations

Disaster Management Team. The authority to allocate up to $200,000 to support rapid emergency response activities by the resident coordinator was supported.

199. The Director of the Geneva Office, Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), on behalf of the Under-Secretary General of DHA, welcomed the initiative of UNDP in providing for the needs of countries in special development situations as described in document DP/1996/21. That was an important and necessary initiative based on experience and recognized that attention needed to be paid to rehabilitation and development during periods of humanitarian crisis. He stated that the Under-Secretary General of DHA also served as the Emergency Relief Coordinator, assisted by the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) and noted that IASC was not mentioned in the guidelines. In referring to paragraph 9(a), he mentioned that it was his assumption that strategic frameworks would cover both relief and recovery programmes. In that regard, he proposed that the initiative of the strategic framework be discussed with IASC members to ensure proper definition in the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian and development partners. It was also important to ensure the useful and necessary distinction between relief and development activities in order that the various resource mobilization mechanisms were used in the most appropriate and effective way. He further underlined the need for all relevant parties to be clear about their responsibilities and the lines of accountability for those actions.

Global, interregional and special activities (line 1.3)

200. Questions were raised about the contents of the global programme. One delegation referred to the combat against the use of illicit drugs as a possible area to be covered by the global programmes.

Support to the resident coordinator (line 3.1)

201. A query was raised regarding the financing of public information activities at the country level within the context of the resident coordinator system. One delegation announced a contribution of 3 million Swiss francs in support of the resident coordinator function.

Responses by the Secretariat

202. The Assistant Administrator welcomed the suggestions for improvements in the guidelines for the implementation of the new programming arrangements and responded to the questions raised by delegations. He underlined the importance of UNDP support to priority areas where the organization had a comparative advantage. UNDP was open to the idea of reporting every four years on country reviews. He underlined the fact that the dialogue envisaged in connection with preparations of the advisory

notes as well as with the local programme appraisal committees would be undertaken with the full knowledge of national authorities. The note, a UNDP internal document, played a very important role in the programming process in ensuring that consistency was maintained within the organization and that experience gained as well as expertise available within the organization was made full use of. The note did not therefore attempt to dilute the importance of the CCF and national ownership. It was clarified that the guidelines did not require the approval of the Executive Board as they formed part of UNDP internal procedures. However, as a "living document", the guidelines would be refined over time and thus the comments on the guidelines by the Board were of great value.

203. With regard to regional economic commissions, he stated that they had a mandate to provide advisory services to members of the region. Regular and specially recruited advisers worked only on the request of a programme country. A constructive dialogue with regional commissions and their important role in that area was sought. The regional framework approach was a useful tool in relation to certain sectoral issues but would not represent a regional strategy for development. The regional bureaux in UNDP would focus on draft programme proposals and then discuss them with partners in the region. With reference to the global programme, UNDP planned to submit a framework to the Executive Board for approval at its third regular session 1996. The problem of illicit drugs would be considered in the preparations for the global framework.

204. The Director of the Emergency Response Division of the Office for United Nations Support and Services emphasized the development role of UNDP, underlining that it was not a relief organization. Further, the primary UNDP role in coordination was to contribute to the formulation of a holistic approach to the requirements of countries facing crisis and to ensure that development needs were addressed as an integrated response. He referred to the discussions held with resident coordinators, DHA, United Nations agencies and NGOs in formulating the guidelines and confirmed the commitment of UNDP to further discussions and clarifications within IASC, particularly on those aspects pertaining to coordination and the development of a strategic framework, including its relationship to existing funding mechanisms. He noted that while the guidelines did not mention the IASC specifically, they did refer to the close involvement of the United Nations Disaster Management Team (DMT) and the United Nations Country Team, which served as the operational extension of IASC at the country level. In response to a question regarding the role of UNDP in the restoration of essential infrastructure, he stated that UNDP did not intend to duplicate the role of the international financial institutions and did not forsee using core resources to provide capital assistance for reconstruction. Rather, UNDP would focus primarily on the provision of assessment and pre-investment studies. In assisting to provide related rehabilitation activities with co-financed resources, UNDP would maintain its established role in undertaking small-scale projects to re-establish basic infrastructure to support transport of goods as well as water, sanitation and electricity services; primarily to facilitate the resettlement of uprooted populations and the support of productive economic activity.

Conclusion

205. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its comments and gave assurance that UNDP would collaborate with its partners, particularly concerning line 1.1.3. Clear lines of responsibility were necessary to ensure the link between relief and development. With regard to the implementation of the programming arrangements, the line of accountability was to him and then to the Executive Board.

206. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that small inconsistencies had arisen in the application of the resource distribution methodology approved in decision 95/23. UNDP was making the necessary, albiet very minor, adjustments and charging the unallocated reserve, which had been set up for the purpose. Resource allocations to other countries remained unaffected. He also informed the Board that the distribution of regional resources (under line 1.2) to the individual regions would be based essentially on the respective percentage shares of country target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) resources, but would also take into account the number of countries in each region since that was necessary for the viability for regional programmes.

207. The Executive Board took note of the note by the Administrator on matters relating to the programming cycles (DP/1996/21) and the comments made thereon.

B. Request from the Government of Namibia

208. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the note by the Administrator on the request from the Government of Namibia for special status equivalent to that of a least developed country (DP/1996/24 and Add.1). She noted that while the gross national product (GNP) per capita of Namibia was above the least developed country threshold, the majority of its population had an income level similar to persons living in least developed countries. Poverty was a major issue, a factor which UNDP was working to address. At the request of the Government, as elaborated in the documentation, the Executive Board was asked to extend Namibia's special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries for the next programming cycle.

209. One delegation, on behalf of many others, and supported by several others, agreed to the request of the Government of Namibia. One delegation, while applauding progress in Namibia and citing the cooperation of its Government with Namibia, stated that it did not support the request since the GNP per capita of Namibia was far above that of least developed countries and it should not continue to have a special status. However, that delegation said it would not oppose a consensus in favour of special status and did not oppose the draft decision circulated on the matter.

210. The representative of Namibia expressed appreciation for the support his Government had received in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/204, in which the General Assembly had requested States and organizations United Nations system and other donors agencies to give special consideration to extending to Namibia special assistance of a scope comparable to that given to a least developed country. He stated that the present request should be seen against the current socio-economic situation in Namibia, which was summarized in document DP/1996/24/Add. 1. Peace and political stability could be jeopardized in Namibia, he stated, if socio-economic constraints were not addressed.

211. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/30. Namibia: Special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the note by the Administrator (DP/1996/24 and Add.1);

2. Recognizes the similarities of the economic and social development in Namibia and those of the least developed countries;

3. Decides to extend to Namibia for the next three years, starting 1997, special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries.

15 May 1996

IX. AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

212. The Associate Administrator introduced the item, noting that the subject had been discussed previously at the second regular session 1996 and at informal consultations in April 1996. Following the consultations, a conference room paper (DP/1996/CRP.10 available in English, French and Spanish) had been prepared to facilitate further discussions.

213. In his summary of the discussions on agency support costs, he noted first that in its decision 95/23, the Executive Board had approved a simplified and consolidated set of three earmarkings for what could be called agency support costs, which would replace the nine separate lines of the current cycle. Second, UNDP had proposed that programme countries be provided access, at their request, to all organizations of the United Nations system that were in a position to provide support services at the policy and programme levels. Third, he wished to make clear that agency support costs represented an additionality to the country-level target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) resources and not a burden on them. Fourth, UNDP had made a modest proposal for simplification of the system of reimbursement of administrative and operational services involved in the implementation of projects. The proposal was drawn up in response to suggestions made by UNDP country offices as well as other operational personnel that the system be simplified. As a result, UNDP had suggested a flat rate of 10 per cent as reimbursement for such services rather than a set of differential cluster rates, which had proven to be cumbersome. UNDP did not believe that the proposals would compromise the original objectives of the support cost system as explained in the conference room paper. He concluded by saying that some delegations had requested that other options be provided to ensure greater openness and flexibility in the support cost system. Those options were described in the conference room paper. He pointed out however, that a high degree of openness and flexibility already existed in the current system. Thus, for instance, implementation services under nationally executed projects could be obtained from any competent entity, including non-governmental organizations and was not limited to United Nations specialized agencies. Also, even though technical support services were obtained from the United Nations agencies, the agencies in turn outsourced such services from a variety of non-United Nations competent organizations. It was estimated that such services could amount to almost 40 per cent of the total.

214. Delegations noted the broad support for change in the support cost system. However, some cautioned that changes should not be made without examining the full picture on the functioning of the system. One delegation asked for the opinion of UNDP on whether or not the system worked and whether specialized agencies were responsive to requests for collaboration. Several interventions focused on the need to undertake revisions in the system in connection with the implementation of the successor programming arrangements.

215. One speaker queried whether the use of support costs should be limited to certain institutions and whether there was a risk that such a system made the concerned institutions less effective and efficient and

thereby increased overhead costs. To facilitate activities at the country level, several speakers recommended that a simple, open and flexible system be designed, which would encourage national execution as the first priority and increase cost-effectiveness. If an external agency was selected for support services, then the system should facilitate the selection of an appropriate institution on a competitive basis to ensure cost efficiency. The representative of one delegation, supported by others, underlined the importance of the synergy of inter-agency cooperation and the substantial technical expertise available in the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, which should not be overlooked or underutilized. He also gave a historical perspective of the support cost system, which was greatly appreciated by other delegations. Another delegation emphasized that while the need for coordination was not being called into question, technical support services should not be limited to United Nations specialized agencies.

216. Some delegations noted that a broad range of national, regional and international institutions could be used for the execution of projects, and underlined that the choice must be determined at the country level. One speaker particularly appreciated the reference to the use of research and public policy institutions in the conference room paper. Another emphasized that recipient countries should exercise increased choice in programme implementation by procuring services from various implementing agencies such as non-governmental organizations, public institutions, national entities, and United Nations agencies. When buying services from non-United Nations sectoral agencies, normal competitive tendering and purchasing should be applied.

217. There was general support for the application of a maximum 10 per cent flat rate for large agencies, since that rate reflected the average in past experience, and an average of 13 per cent for the smaller agencies. One delegation, however, questioned the use of the figure of 10 per cent, given the decrease in agency implementation and the rise in national execution of UNDP-funded projects. Several speakers supported a formula that would result in reimbursement for the actual average costs incurred if actual costs fell below 10 per cent.

218. Representatives of the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization took the floor to emphasize that considerations on the issue were more than solely financial: they encouraged the Executive Board to support further dialogue on the role of the specialized agencies in the implementation of projects at the country level. The speakers emphasized the role of the Government in the selection of expertise.

219. The Associate Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its comments on the issue. He stated that the agency support costs system was indeed working but that it could also be improved. As stated at the second regular session 1996, the agency support costs system was a partnership, with all entities part of the larger picture of the United Nations system. The overall goal was to provide recipient countries with the best assistance available to fulfil their goals. In response to a query, he

confirmed that the average reimbursement rate had been 10 per cent. UNDP agreed to the suggestion raised regarding cases where actual costs fell below 10 per cent. In response to another question, he stated that regional commissions did not receive a particular earmarking in the system and that their collaboration would depend on the decisions of national Governments in the selection of expertise for particular projects.

220. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/31. UNDP: Agency support costs

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the reports of the Administrator contained in documents DP/1996/13, DP/1995/49 and the additional information provided on the agency support costs;

2. Reaffirms the continued relevance and importance of the original key objectives of the agency support cost arrangements, which underline that the arrangements shall serve to:

(a) Provide incentives for national execution and ensure that agency technical support services are available to Governments, particularly for nationally executed programmes/projects;

(b) Improve the upstream technical focus of agencies and reduce their administrative and operational involvement in programme/project implementation;

(c) Assign resources that will permit programme countries to exercise increased choice in programme/project implementation;

3. Welcomes the confirmation provided by agency representatives that, following implementation of decision 91/32, agency technical support to national execution as well as the technical focus of the agencies have increased;

4. Decides that, under the successor programming arrangements, the current guidelines for support costs will continue to apply and will be adjusted only to the extent necessary to:

(a) Ensure coherence with the overall procedures, programme review, monitoring and oversight system being established for the successor programming arrangements;

(b) Reflect experience with the support costs arrangements from the fifth cycle;

(c) Accommodate the more simplified system of support costs earmarking;

5. Requests the Administrator to ensure that the agency support cost arrangements become more driven by country priorities and demands within the context of United Nations Development Programme-supported programmes;

6. Also requests the Administrator to promote the relevance of and enhance the linkage of the upstream technical support by agencies to United Nations Development Programme support for national programmes;

7. Decides that the support cost facilities will be administered directly by country offices in close collaboration and consultation with the programme countries and that the facilities should be used to encourage national execution of programmes and projects; and requests the Administrator to promote the involvement of competent and competitive national and regional institutions in support for policy and programme development and technical implementation;

8. Emphasizes the importance of the flexible and notional character of the special allocations under lines 1.6 (resources for implementation), 2.2 (United Nations system suppport for policy and programme development), 2.3 (technical support services from United Nations specialized agencies) and takes note of the inclusion of the regional commissions in the support cost arrangements;

9. Urges the Administrator to ensure that the support of the regional commissions is focused mainly on upstream work to support national and regional programme development and requests the Administrator to inform the Board of the procedures and areas of concentration for the utilization of support for policy and programme development for regional commissions when they have been finalized;

10. Decides that in order to enhance the incentive for national execution, in accordance with paragraph 22 of document DP/1996/13, any resources assigned for implementation of programmes and projects saved through national execution will become available for additional programming by the country, including the promotion of capacity-building for national execution;

11. Decides that the United Nations Development Programme, in order to simplify the system, should reimburse the cost of administrative and support services to the five large agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Department of Development Support and Management Services) and the United Nations Office for Project Services with a maximum of 10 per cent, which experience has shown is the present average reimbursement rate for various inputs. Should the actual costs fall below 10 per cent, only the actual costs incurred will be reimbursed;

12. Also decides in the context of paragraph 10 of the present decision that the United Nations Development Programme should ensure that agencies maintain the existing cost measurement system and that

the Administrator should continue to report to the Executive Board biennially on the actual costs incurred; and provide recommendations if necessary to revise the reimbursement rate, also for individual agencies;

13. Requests that the United Nations Development Programme, in close collaboration with the specialized agencies, make every effort to ensure that the experience of individual countries is disseminated throughout the system and used for the benefit of the larger development community;

14. Encourages the specialized agencies to take all steps to enhance their cost-effectiveness and efficiency in providing administrative and support services;

15. Requests the Administrator to review recent experiences with the agency support cost arrangement at the country level, building on the evaluation presented on this matter in 1994 and to report thereon, describing lessons learned and proposing various alternatives, to the Executive Board at the annual meeting 1997 in the context of the review of the successor programming arrangements;

16. Requests the Administrator to inform the specialized agencies and regional commissions of the present decision.

15 May 1996

X. UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

221. The Executive Coordinator introduced the report of the Administrator on United Nations Volunteers (UNV) (DP/1996/22). She cited the sharper focus on UNV work in poverty eradication and the evolution of activities in humanitarian, peace-building and governance areas, as well as the promotion of human rights. The Joint Inspection Unit had recently recommended more extensive use of UNV in addressing the root causes of conflict. The support of the Executive Board was sought in encouraging United Nations organizations to make even greater use of UNV specialists and fieldworkers in the full spectrum of development, humanitarian and peace activities.

222. She highlighted several facets of UNV operations, including: the severe funding constraints of two programmes transferred to UNV in 1994, United Nations Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN); the legislation by the General Assembly (resolution 50/19) which gave UNV operational responsibility for the White Helmets initiative; and the use of contributions to the UNV Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) for local grass-roots initiatives, stressing the need for early transfer of funds.

223. UNV was redesigning its business processes and undertaking organizational streamlining in order to cope better with expanding demand from programme countries and partner organizations. Outsourcing to Cyprus and the move of UNV headquarters to Bonn were generating some cost-savings. Equally, the relocation to Bonn as the first headquarters of a United Nations organization in Germany, presented UNV with potential new synergies and challenges.

224. The Executive Coordinator informed the Executive Board that to maintain the quality of the UNV programme and operational efficiency, UNV needed a minimum 10 per cent support cost for its extrabudgetary activities. That, she noted, was the equivalent of what most other organizations charged and conformed with UNDP guidelines for agency support costs. The base, which determined the support cost, was the cost of volunteers, and yielded little income.

225. Lessons learnt were fed back into the programme, and a number of evaluations, including of the use of the SVF and national UNVs and volunteer contributions in humanitarian assistance and peace-building, were being finalized. Strategy 2000, for the years 1997 to 2000, was under preparation. In addition, the support of the Executive Board was sought for the designation of 2001 as the International Year of the Volunteer, an idea proposed at a policy forum in Tokyo earlier in the year and fully endorsed in May 1996 by 40 volunteer-sending agencies. UNV believed the designation of an international year by the General Assembly would mobilize recognition and expansion of local, national and international volunteer efforts worldwide.

226. One delegation introduced a draft decision, supported by many others, which included designating 2001 as the International Year of the Volunteer.

227. Another delegation said 1996 had been a landmark year for UNV, as it was the organization's 25th anniversary and the Executive Board had decided to endorse the proposal of the Secretary-General to accept the offer of the Government of Germany to relocate UNV headquarters to Bonn in mid-1996. The representative noted the increased involvement of UNV in humanitarian relief and United Nations peace operations, which was documented in the proportional increases in funds for project budgets received from other United Nations system organizations. UNV was increasingly serving the entire United Nations system and added value to various operations. A good example was the White Helmets initiative, which his Government supported. Through the building-up and strengthening of domestic capacities in the form of national volunteer corps in prevention, relief and rehabilitation, a process could be started whereby affected countries were less reliant on short-term and expensive humanitarian experts brought in for only short periods of time. His Government supported the central role of development in UNV work. In that regard, the UNV Domestic Development Services (DDS) programme, which built upon locally available capacities, merited further and broader support, including from UNDP. The DDS programme covered central areas of the UNDP approach to development. Support to DDS would come at a time when funds received from UNDP had further decreased to about 36 per cent of UNV project budgets for 1995 as compared with about 47 per cent for 1994. The relocation of UNV to Bonn would not only bring it closer to Brussels and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States but it would also increase its visibility in the system and enable it to create new partnerships. Further efforts by the Administrator, as legislated in decision 95/28, to increase programme activities involving United Nations volunteers in light of the expected costs and savings of the relocation would be welcomed.

228. Many speakers congratulated UNV on its 25 years of operations and cited their support for the diversity of UNV activities, with some citing in particular positive views in respect of its work in rehabilitation and conflict prevention, especially with regard to the White Helmets initiative. One delegation queried whether UNV had undertaken any assessment of its history. That delegation, later supported by another, expressed concern that, owing to its move, linkage with the Geneva-based United Nations organizations might be lost.

229. Another delegation underlined the need to pay close attention to the financial situation of UNDP and its effect on UNV, particularly with regard to the development work of the UNISTAR and TOKTEN programmes. That delegation also agreed with the Executive Coordinator that a minimum 10 per cent support cost should be applied for extrabudgetary activities. More details on programme administration, incentives to attract quality volunteers, and efficiency were sought, as was information on the origin and specialities of the volunteers. One delegation expressed concern as to the need for more rapid implementation of SVF projects. Another delegation sought clarification on the procedure regarding Executive Board draft decisions, and whether co-sponsorship was necessary since decisions were adopted by consensus.

230. One delegation expressed the strong support of his Gov rnment for the work of the United Nations International Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) programme, which had cooperated with the private sector in his country. The representative stated that the programme benefited both UNV and multinational corporations and was of great assistance to recipient countries. His Government supported the expansion of the UNISTAR programme in the future and announced a pledge of $100,000 in 1996 as a replenishment to the UNV Trust Fund.

231. The representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) noted that WFP was one of the biggest users of UNV specialists, who played a critical role in WFP operations, both in food-for-work projects and, increasingly, in emergency operations. He expressed the gratitude of WFP for the fruitful cooperation enjoyed with UNV and congratulated UNV on its anniversary.

232. The Executive Coordinator thanked Executive Board members for their observations and guidance, and informed them that the UNV Strategy 2000, which would be made available in working languages, would encompass the views and comments on UNV past performance. With regard to an assessment of its past performance, she noted that five thematic evaluations and 12 in-depth evaluations had taken place last year alone. She concurred that DDS should be strengthened and hoped that UNISTAR and TOKTEN would have a broader base in Europe and developing countries in the future. She noted the current profile of UNV specialists, and referred to related available documentation available to the Board. She regretted the surplus of SVF carry-over noted in the report, given that participatory design and implementation of grass-roots programmes had taken longer than expected. With mechanisms for working with community-based organizations now in place, she was, however, persuaded that disbursements would be expedited. With regard to linkages with Geneva-based and other organizations, she underlined the goal to maintain them in the future through consultative mechanisms such as a "Friends of UNV" network.

233. She thanked all delegations for their support to UNV, and expressed appreciation to the Republic of Korea for its contribution announced at the meeting. She took note of the strong support for the UNISTAR programme and reiterated her intention to seek to strengthen its resource base.

234. The Executive Coordinator expressed her profound gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for having hosted UNV up until the present time and to the Government of Germany, which would do so in the future. It was anticipated that the Secretary-General would inaugurate the new UNV headquarters in Bonn in June 1996.

235. A special event was held in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNV. The Executive Director noted that a report on the proceedings would be made available to Executive Board members. She welcomed the suggestion that the Board convene an informal meeting in Bonn to pursue the topics relating to the roles of volunteers in tackling the root causes of conflict, discussed at the special event.

236. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/32. United Nations Volunteers

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator (DP/1996/22);

2. Notes the substantial contribution of the United Nations Volunteers programme to humanitarian, peace-keeping, peace-building, human rights and rehabilitation activities as well as to poverty eradication;

3. Encourages the United Nations Volunteers to intensify participation in the full spectrum of development, humanitarian and peace activities of the United Nations system and its related organizations;

4. Recognizes the work being undertaken by the United Nations Volunteers through the Special Voluntary Fund in supporting community efforts;

5. Recommends that the United Nations Volunteers stand ready to cooperate with Governments and the United Nations system bodies in order to replicate successful results at the country level;

6. Stresses the need for further contributions, including through, for example, co-financing arrangements, to the Special Voluntary Fund for activities of the United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Short-Term Advisory Resources, and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals and other United Nations Volunteers operations;

7. Stresses, in this connection, the importance of accountability and transparency as well as the need for timely reporting on United Nations Volunteers activities to the Executive Board;

8. Supports the United Nations Volunteers as the United Nations operational arm of the White Helmets initiative and for the effective implementation of this initiative calls upon countries in a position to do so, to provide support, including financial support, to the window in the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 49/139B and 50/19 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/44;

9. Acknowledges the importance of the contribution made by volunteers worldwide and supports United Nations Volunteers efforts to promote further volunteer work;

10. Takes notes, in this context, of the proposal of the United Nations Volunteers to consider having the International Year of Volunteers 2001 as one of the instruments to promote volunteerism.

10 May 1996

XI. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

237. The Associate Administrator introduced the item. He stated that as a result of aggressive management measures and vigorous resource mobilization, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had made great strides in recovering from its financial problems of 1995. He assured the Executive Board that UNDP would maintain its rigorous review and direct support in connection with UNIFEM finances. He thanked the Board for its constructive concern and those donors who had increased their financial contributions to the Fund. That support had helped to ensure that UNIFEM remained the strong and viable organization for promoting the advancement of women that Governments and the United Nations system needed.

238. The Administrator, he noted, had been cooperating closely with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to launch the in-depth evaluation of the UNIFEM programme in line with Executive Board decision 95/32 and the Board-endorsed terms of reference. The evaluation would provide an important opportunity to review the performance of UNIFEM to date and ensure that programmes were strategically focused to achieve maximum impact.

239. In accordance with decision 95/32, UNOPS had undertaken a fully transparent international selection process in strict accordance with its financial rules and procedures. Four organizations had submitted proposals, which were carefully evaluated by a tender evaluation committee. The Committee agreed by consensus that Management Systems International (MSI), a research firm run by women and based in Washington D.C., was best suited to undertake the evaluation. The process had been further reviewed and endorsed by the UNOPS Procurement Review Advisory Committee. Finally, with the endorsement of the Administrator, the Executive Director of UNOPS had authorized UNOPS staff to enter into negotiations with MSI. The negotiations led to a further enhancement of the MSI proposal with a view to ensuring that the terms of reference were fully covered by the proposed approach. The MSI team, which included core team members from developing countries, launched the evaluation in mid-February 1996. The initial phase extended over a six-week period and included an exhaustive review of UNIFEM documentation as well as in-depth interviews. Consultations were held with UNIFEM, UNDP and other United Nations entities, as well as with organizations outside the United Nations system that were closely associated with gender issues.

240. The second phase of the evaluation, to be completed by mid-May, involved visits to countries selected in accordance with the terms of reference. The countries were Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Philippines, Senegal, and Tanzania. The final phase of the evaluation was scheduled for mid-June 1996 and would be presented to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996.

241. The Associate Administrator informed the Executive Board that the Administrator had established a trust fund to facilitate the pledging of contributions to cover the costs associated with the evaluation. Contributions to the trust fund had fully covered the total estimated

evaluation budget of $289,000. He expressed appreciation to those countries who had made contributions. The evaluation would help to enable UNIFEM to play the major role called for by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

242. The Director of UNIFEM delivered an oral report to the Executive Board. She noted that UNIFEM had ended 1995 with an unexpended balance of general resources of $4.1 million. Income to general resources in 1996 was estimated at $13.89 million. At present, the Fund's project costs were estimated to be $11 million in 1996. Administrative costs had remained constant at $3.2 million. As a result, UNIFEM anticipated having sufficient funds to be able to re-establish the operational reserve in late 1996. A detailed proposal on the matter would be presented to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996. A number of activities to implement the Beijing Platform for Action had now begun. In addition to financial information, the Executive Director provided information on the new programme focus of UNIFEM. The Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women had been established.

243. Several delegations stated that they were pleased with the progress in financial and programme areas of UNIFEM reported upon and that they looked forward to reviewing the evaluation report at the third regular session 1996. Several delegations congratulated UNIFEM for enhancing its partnerships with other organizations in the United Nations system and with donors. The Fund should work in areas where it had comparative advantage and focus its activities on the political and economic empowerment of women, avoiding a scattering of small projects. One delegation requested more specific information on the programme work of UNIFEM, in particular concerning its activities in different regions, especially Africa. Some delegations outlined measures taken by their national Governments regarding the empowerment of women, which were in line with the programme focus of UNIFEM. One delegation asked for more donors to become involved in the Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women. It was suggested that after the third regular session 1996, UNIFEM should report only annually to the Executive Board.

244. The Director of UNIFEM responded to the questions and comments raised. She noted that UNIFEM had shifted from away from involvement in many small projects, in favour of a programme approach. The annual report of UNIFEM, which would be made available to the Executive Board, would contain an overview of projects, including by region. She assured the Executive Board that most UNIFEM resources were spent in Africa. She also noted that the Fund had programmes to assist women in war-torn African countries. In response to a query regarding the gender balance among staff in UNIFEM, she informed the Board that UNIFEM had seven male staff members. In response to another question, she stated that projects that it had not been possible to implement during the previous year because of financial constraints would be re-phased as the funding situation improved. UNIFEM also looked forward to undertaking new projects. In order to fulfil its role in follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, it was hoped that UNIFEM could double its resource base to $25 million in the future.

245. The Executive Board took note of the oral reports on UNIFEM.

XII. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

246. The Executive Director introduced his report on organizational changes in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) (DP/1996/23). He described the measures that UNOPS had taken in the first year of its existence as a separate entity to improve its performance with regard to the quality of its services, client confidence and recovery of its project portfolio. He noted that, as a result in no small part of the special efforts of UNOPS staff, the previous downward trend in the portfolio of UNOPS had been reversed and that the portfolio had been rebuilt to a level equal to that before the merger discussions.

247. The Executive Director stressed two elements of the UNOPS organizational reform process. The first concerned the focus on integrated operational teams, which combined under single management the functional capacities and authority necessary to meet the needs of clients. The second concerned the continuation of the UNOPS policy of decentralization, regarding which the Executive Director reported on the agreement of the Management Coordination Committee to the proposed relocation of the Division of Procurement Projects to Copenhagen and that of the Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability Unit to Geneva, both scheduled for mid-1996.

248. Clarifying the somewhat different usage of United Nations terminology as it applied to an implementing entity, the Executive Director noted that the organizational unit presented on page 7 of document DP/1996/23 as the Policy and Legal Division had, subsequent to the release of the report, been renamed the Policy and Contracts Division.

249. Five delegations took the floor to comment on the item, with several expressing appreciation for the inclusion of charts in the document, which made some of the concepts clearer. All speakers expressed support for the reorganization intiatives, most particularly for the move towards the formation of integration teams. Two speakers expressed interest in learning more about the strategic directions of UNOPS, mentioning specifically their desire for additional information regarding the business planning process mentioned in the document.

250. One delegation stressed the importance of UNOPS staff in the field maintaining close contact and regular communication with one another in order to ensure that problems were either avoided or resolved promptly at the local level. In that context, the speaker also voiced the expectation that decentralized units would have the full complement of staff and delegated authority necessary for full responsiveness to client needs. The delegation also urged UNOPS to continue paying close attention to the rates which it was charging for non-project procurement services and to ensure that UNOPS communicated clearly with funding sources regarding the considerations according to which fees were determined.

251. The Executive Director acknowledged the interest shown in the UNOPS business planning process and clarified the role of the business plan as an internal management tool that facilitated the building of consensus within UNOPS and interaction with the Management Coordination Committee. Noting that an operational document such as the business plan could not normally be part of the documentation submitted to the Executive Board, he stated that UNOPS would gladly make the business plan and other such documents available to interested delegations.

252. UNOPS took its communications with key clients very seriously, the Executive Director noted, and intended to build further on the one-on-one meetings it held regularly with such clients. Addressing the comments concerning delegation of authority to outposted UNOPS units, he emphasized that UNOPS policy for decentralization encompassed full delegation of authority necessary to avoid creating additional layers of bureaucracy. That approach also created the requisite conditions for full accountability.

253. With regard to the issue of rate-setting, the Executive Director pointed out that the rates associated with non-project services were well below those for project services. UNOPS would, however, continue to strive to achieve the right balance between both cost containment and control of risk to the resources placed by clients in the care of UNOPS.

254. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/33. United Nations Office for Project Services

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director (DP/1996/23);

2. Encourages the Executive Director to continue his efforts to make the United Nations Office for Project Services more innovative and cost-effective, as recommended by the Management Coordination Committee;

3. Requests that the Executive Director keep the Executive Board apprised of the operational results and financial implications of the reorganization of the United Nations Office for Project Services within the framework of future annual reports, submitted through the Management Coordination Committee.

15 May 1996

XIII. OTHER MATTERS

A. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

255. The Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) addressed the Executive Board, as requested at its second regular session 1996. He stated that the main priority for the Programme in its first four months of operation had been at the country level, with the establishment of 103 country-based theme groups, covering 109 countries. Where present, the six co-sponsoring organizations of UNAIDS were members of the theme groups, and in many countries, other United Nations system organizations were members. Governments were also represented in a majority of the theme groups, either as full members or as observers. He further noted that more than three quarters of the theme groups were chaired by the representative of the World Health Organization while 16 per cent were chaired by UNDP Resident Representatives. It was recommended that, in order to increase diversity, the chairs of the theme groups be selected on a rotating basis among the co-sponsors.

256. The Executive Director informed the Executive Board that 12 of 20 UNAIDS country programme advisers (CPAs) selected were in place. It was expected that some 30 CPAs would be appointed by the end of June 1996.

257. UNAIDS and UNDP had signed an agreement establishing a working arrangement for the provision of administrative support services to UNAIDS country-level activities, including disbursements of funds for national HIV/AIDS activities. The Executive Board was informed that two of 22 national programme officers (NPOs), in Thailand and Botswana, were acting as UNAIDS focal points and one UNV specialist was acting as UNAIDS focal point in El Salvador. Countries where national programme officers would act as UNAIDS focal points were being identified on a case-by-case basis. The arrangements for fully integrating NPOs were the following: (a) where there was no CPA, UNDP NPOs could act as CPAs, devoting half of their time to the theme group work; (b) in that capacity, the UNAIDS focal point should report in the same manner as the other CPAs, first to the chairperson of the theme group, and then to the UNAIDS secretariat; and (c) all NPOs (whether UNAIDS focal points or not) would be included in the UNAIDS information network and could receive the same training as UNAIDS field staff.

258. He informed the Executive Board that a UNAIDS staff member would be posted to the Office for United Nations System Support and Services. Training in the area of HIV/AIDS for resident coordinators, both at the country level and at the ILO Turin Centre, was also proceeding. Steps were also being taken towards greater harmonization of activities of the co-sponsors at the global level, an area in which continued work was needed. The Executive Director underlined the need to concentrate efforts on youth, as over 50 per cent of new HIV infections occurred in those under 24 years of age, with the majority in those much younger than 20. In that regard, education was a key component of UNAIDS work at the country level, with successful collaboration among United Nations organizations already seen.

259. Given the difficult financial situation of some co-sponsors, resource mobilization was a key priority. While it had initially been hoped that financing could come from the core budgets of the co-sponsors, it now appeared that supplementary funding was needed. A joint resource mobilization effort for co-sponsors activities, the "Global Appeal", had been discussed recently by the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations, with a workplan soon to be finalized.

260. In conclusion, the Executive Director cited the obstacles faced in establishing a joint and co-sponsored programme, including resistance to any new programme, synchronization of governance arrangements, the structural and programmatic differences among the co-sponsors, lack of decision-making power at the country level for the representatives of some co-sponsors, and differing planning cycles. He also noted that UNAIDS was not yet fully staffed. Plans for the immediate future, to be discussed at the Programme Coordinating Board in June 1996, included further development of UNAIDS planned activities and of coherent, joint plans with co-sponsors, co-ownership with all co-sponsors, particularly at the country level, a framework for evaluation and monitoring, and elaboration of best practices.

261. Several delegations took the floor to express their appreciation for the statement. Queries were raised as to what the Executive Board could do to facilitate the work of UNAIDS at the country level, on the role of NGOs in UNAIDS, the effectiveness of UNFPA in UNAIDS at the country level, and the reasons for problems in staffing. Information on the priorities of UNAIDS was also sought, particularly in the most vulnerable countries.

262. The Executive Director responded that the Executive Board could insure that UNDP and UNFPA had the resources they needed to continue to work on HIV/AIDS activities. The Board could also encourage the support of UNAIDS by the two organizations and the collaborative work of NPOs with UNAIDS. He noted that there were five representatives of NGOs on the Programme Coordinating Board. Effective work was under way in countries where there had been strong cooperation, with Governments and with NGOs. With regard to priorities, he emphasized that the work of UNAIDS was for the very long term, and that strengthening the capacity of countries was of vital concern. In that regard, there could be no one single approach since UNAIDS had to promote a double strategy, which included both risk reduction and vulnerability reduction. The contribution of UNFPA had been very effective, and in cooperation with intercountry teams, the purchase of condoms in the effort to reduce risk, was now being discussed. Staff for UNAIDS was selected on the basis of merit and quality as well as diversity on a geographical basis. He noted that 40 per cent of the Professionals in UNAIDS were women.

B. Round-table process

263. One delegation suggested that the subject of the round-table process be discussed at future sessions of the Executive Board. The representative noted that the round-table process had been set up to meet certain criteria, and that recent round-table meetings had not reached their targets, a factor that should be examined by the Board. Avenues for discussion could be whether the round-table meetings should be more technical, more focused on development objectives and whether they should involve more partners.

C. United Nations Capital Development Fund

264. One delegation informed the Executive Board about consultations among the major donors to the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). The representative referred to the challenge to donors offered by UNCDF in 1995 to provide predictable funding for the period 1996-1999. At that time, the Fund had set out goals and new policy directions and had determined that it would be able to concentrate on substance rather than fund-raising in those three years if their proposal was accepted. In addition, at the end of the period, the attainment of the goals would be assessed, and on the basis

of the performance of UNCDF, the future of the Fund determined. The eight countries wished to respond seriously to the challenge and had agreed to aim at providing the financial predictability sought by UNCDF.

265. The representative read the statement on the funding intention of donor countries for UNCDF: "The eight donor countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland) recognize that the new policy framework of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is aimed at giving new momentum to the work of the organization and that the Fund should be given the opportunity to concentrate on delivering a solid product and to demonstrate its capabilities. For this purpose, predictability in the financial contributions for a three-year period has been requested by UNCDF, ensuring that the budget remains at least at its present level. The eight donor countries jointly recognize the funding needs of UNCDF and declare their aim of providing resources commensurate with this need, subject to the parliamentary procedures and approval and bearing in mind the implementation of the annual budget. The eight donor countries will meet annually to assess the realization of their intention. An evaluation will be carried out in 1999 to assess the work of UNCDF and to provide the basis for a decision on its future activities. The eight donors encourage UNCDF to reach out to new donors."

266. Several speakers took the floor to thank the eight donor countries for their decision, which would ensure greater predictability with regard to resources for UNCDF. The Fund was an important instrument in poverty eradication. One speaker said that it was a good example for other programmes and that the Executive Board should discuss the linkage between funding and resources, particularly following the conclusion of the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 48/162. The Administrator commended the eight donors on their commitment and underlined the key role of UNCDF in the United Nations family. He cited the need for similar predictability of resources for UNDP as well as for UNIFEM and for the United Nations Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO).

D. UNDP and the International Olympic Committee

267. The Director of the UNDP European Office informed the Executive Board that the Administrator and the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had signed a cooperation agreement that brought both organizations together at national and international levels to sponsor activities which contributed to the eradication of poverty and the promotion of human development. The initiative, "An Appeal of Olympic Athletes against Poverty" had been prepared jointly and drew attention to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. Emphasis would be on action at the local level that involved communities and young people, and would, it was hoped, go beyond the current year. The IOC had offered UNDP a site at the International Olympic Village, where the Appeal would be displayed and signed by Olympians.

E. Miscellaneous

268. One delegation asked for an updated staff list of UNDP and UNFPA.

269. The same delegation called for the more substantive involvement of representatives of specialized agencies in the discussions held during the Executive Board.

F. Conclusion of the session

270. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision:

95/34. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during its annual session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its annual session 1996 (DP/1995/L.7/Rev.1);

Approved the report of the second regular session 1996 (DP/1995/17 and Corr.1);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Third regular session 1996:	9-13 September 1996
First regular session 1997:	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997:	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997:	12-23 May 1997 - New York
Third regular session 1997:	15-19 September 1997

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third session 1996 and first session 1997 as listed in the annex;

ITEM 2: RULES OF PROCEDURE

Adopted decision 96/25 of 15 May 1996 on matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

Took note of the annual report of the Executive Director for 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I)), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion on the item as reflected in the report on the session;

Took note of the report on the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects (DP/FPA/1996/19);

Took note of the periodic report on evaluation (DP/FPA/1996/20);

Adopted decision 96/26 of 8 May 1996 on the work plan of the United Nations Population Fund for 1997-2000 and request for programme expenditure authority;

Adopted decision 96/27 of 17 May 1996 on enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular in Africa;

ITEM 4: MISSION STATEMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

Adopted decision 96/28 of 8 May 1996 on the mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund;

UNDP/UNFPA JOINT SEGMENT

ITEM 5: UNDP/UNFPA: REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Took note of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II)) and the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (DP/1996/18/Add.2) and agreed to transmit them, together with, as annexes: (a) the extract of the report on the annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board dealing with the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment; (b) the extract of the report on the annual session of the Board dealing with the implementation of programming arrangements; and (c) the extract of the report on the second regular session 1996 of the Board dealing with evaluation;

ITEM 6: UNDP/UNFPA: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral progress report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts with the comments made thereon;

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 7: UNDP: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS

Took note of the annual report of the Administrator for 1995: introduction (DP/1996/18); main programme record (DP/1996/18/Add.1); reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNDP (DP/1996/18/Add.3); and statistical annex (DP/1996/18/Add.4), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion of the item as reflected in the report on the session;

Took note of the report on the role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (DP/1996/20);

Adopted decision 96/29 of 15 May 1996 on the UNDP mission statement.

ITEM 8: UNDP: MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/21);

Adopted decision 96/30 of 17 May 1996 extending special status to Namibia equivalent to that given to least developed countries;

ITEM 9: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Adopted decision 96/31 of 15 May 1996 on the implementation of the support costs components of the successor programming arrangements;

ITEM 10: UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Adopted decision 96/32 of 10 May 1996 on the United Nations Volunteers;

ITEM 11: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Took note of the oral report on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

ITEM 12: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Adopted decision 96/33 of 15 May 1996 on the United Nations Office for Project Services;

ITEM 13: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the presentation made by the UNAIDS representative.

17 June 1995